BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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USA and Canada	US $25 per annum
UK	£15 per annum
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Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of:

(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins

(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to your first issue of BING magazine for 2009. This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the ICC. From its humble beginnings in 1936 as a little 5 1/2" x 8", twenty-page publication, I'm sure then President / Editor Cecilia Joseph, and Vice-President / Assistant Editor Lynne Hofstetter couldn't have imagined that their little creation would endure for almost three quarters of a century, become the longest running fan club in history, and evolve into the high-quality, 60-page publication you are now holding in your hands. No doubt they, and Bing, would be very proud of these accomplishments.

I hope many of you were able to take advantage of member Michael Feinstein's generosity and purchase the CD he made possible of rare Woodbury radio performances. We're all deeply grateful to Michael for granting the ICC exclusive use of these amazing, previously unknown airchecks.

Speaking of the Woodbury shows, in doing research for my annual Christmas radio show, I found that this year marks the 75th anniversary of Bing's versions of "Adeste Fideles" and "Silent Night" being a part of the Christmas season. He first broadcast the songs as his opening and closing numbers respectively on his Woodbury program Christmas night, 1934, and would feature them each consecutive year, in those spots, on his own Christmas radio programs for the next nineteen years. His commercial recordings of the songs became available in 1935 and these, and subsequent re-recordings, have been heard every year since. Bing is, without a doubt, the undisputed voice of Christmas, which is indeed a fine legacy to leave behind.

We can be grateful for these, and the many other Christmas recordings Bing made throughout his illustrious career. They continue to captivate new generations, and inspire them to seek more information on other career aspects of this man with the friendly smiling face, looking like jolly 'ol St. Nick himself, wearing Santa's hat and a holly-leaf bow tie. That pose, taken in 1950, remains the best-known and most easily recognized Christmas album cover in history. His posthumously released duet with David Bowie ranks among his most popular, and most requested Christmas songs on radio. How wonderful that Bing was able to leave us with one final Christmas classic.

His movies, so many of which have become treasures, continue to weave their magic spell. *White Christmas* is among the most-often aired films on television during the Christmas season, and this year it made return appearances to large crowds in many cinemas. The newly colorized *Holiday Inn* DVD set created more media "buzz" for Bing in the last quarter of 2008, along with Sirius / XM's "Bing Crosby Christmas Radio" channel being among the most listened to during the month of December.

So to all of the new members who've just cracked open their first issue of BING as a result of interest

generated by the aforementioned, we welcome you most heartily to the ICC and hope you will be with us for many years to come. To those long-standing members beginning to read yet another new issue, we welcome you back for another fruitful year immersed in all things Crosby. Before I turn it over to Malcolm, keep an eye out in the next few months for a new feature story on Bing's country music influence and Elko ranch days in *Cowboys & Indians* magazine, the premier magazine of the West. Also, on March 10th, the classic "Bing & Satchmo" album, recorded in 1960, is being released to CD in its entirety for the first time in the USA, on the DRG label.

Now, here's Malcolm.

Greg Van Beek

Thanks, Greg. Members have been very kind in expressing their appreciation of the latest Sepia CD and also the Woodbury CD. It was disturbing to find that the Sepia CD was put on the Internet for others to download before retailers received their copies. This means that one of our members must have made this possible. May we please ask members not to do this? It is essential that the Sepia Chronological issues continue and making it available to others free of charge is a sure-fire way of killing future issues. Details of the latest Sepia issue are enclosed and again we urge members to support this.

We were pleased to see the announcement by Little, Brown and Company that Gary Giddins' second volume of Bing's biography, *Bing Crosby: Swinging on a Star – The Later Years, 1940-77* is scheduled for publication in the Fall of 2012. This does seem a long way off but we know that it will be worth the wait.

Our thanks to Jon Oye for providing the back cover for this issue and my apologies to those contributors whose articles have had to be kept back until next time. As always, we have a lot for you to digest. Happy reading!

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

The International Club Crosby's first CD - **Bing Crosby Entertains for Woodbury Soap** - has proved to be a big hit with members with all 500 copies selling out by early January. Members have extolled Bing's magnificent early voice and we are indebted to Michael Feinstein for his generosity in making this rare material available to us. Wig and I are compiling a list of those who missed out on the CD and if we can get sufficient numbers we will arrange for a second batch to be produced.

Members have also bought the Sepia CDs vols. 1 and 2 with great enthusiasm and we look forward to their support for volume 3.

As you will read below, members across the world have responded generously when renewing their subscription for 2009 and despite increasing costs and the chill economic winds we can look forward to a successful year ahead for the ICC.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members to the ICC and we trust that through their membership they will gain friends and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Bing's illustrious career.

UNITED STATES

Mark Browning (Charleston, West Virginia), Brook Babcock (Nashville, Tennessee), David Clausen (Matthews, North Carolina), Joseph McGrenra (Virginia Beach, Virginia), Michael Mitchell (Tallmadge, Ohio), Albert Montlongo (Walnut, California), David Robbins (Coram, New York),

CANADA

Peter Kirichuk (Oakville, Ontario)

UNITED KINGDOM

Dennis Newton (Knutsford, Cheshire).

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support provided by the following members.

Richard a. Pisz of Union, New Jersey USA and **Jean Rainey** of London, England have gifted exceptional amounts to the ICC funds for the coming year. Both were keen to express their admiration for the continuing efforts of the ICC team to honour Bing's memory and Richard expressed his thoughts in a letter from which I quote: -

"Enclosed is a little Christmas present for the International Club Crosby from me, as a sincere token of grateful acknowledgement for the outstanding job you have all done in promoting the appreciation of the remarkable talents of the immortal Bing Crosby. The donation is a finite one but the many years of sheer enjoyment I share with so many fans is priceless. Use it in any way that will help in continuing those efforts.

As a boy and young man, it was a privilege growing up with Bing. It felt like he was there in the living room with us, soothing our souls and lifting our spirits with his dulcet tones in a plethora of venues, so varied that it set the tone for an occasion. In our hearts he was like family, and represented so well the "Norman Rockwell" America we loved and miss so much.

One in a million....that's Bing! May his memory and songs live on for many generations to enjoy. May you all continue to bask in the comfort and warmth of Bing's unmatched gift of making us all feel "at home" and feeling the wonder and joy that is life itself".

We thank Richard for the warmth of his sentiments, which are shared in varying ways by Jean and by the many very generous contributors listed below.

Scott Ables, James Bauman, Tom Chevrette, James Clifford, Lee Cook, Don Cretella, Howard Crosby, Milton Cummings, David Currie, Stanley Diebel, Anthony Diflorio, Marlin Dornbush, Laurence Doyle, James Draper, Helen Feiereisen, Victor Ferguson, Frank Heiderer, Dick Heman, Rev. Jerome Heyman, Laurence

Kieran, Marcia Kukla, Joyce Lundberg, Alan Matheson, Roger Mesiano, Ralph Morris, Paul Murphy, Al O'Hagan, Dolores Onorato, Scott Payne, Rev. Eugene Roberts, Don Rogele, Mozelle Seger, John Sarro, John Shaw, Stan Shipp, Aldo Silengo, Edward Sinnott, Britton Smith, Robert Stagnaro, Michael Strada, Robert Stratiff, Ernest Sutkowski, Philip Teicher, Greg Van Beek, Charles Van Riper, Charles Vincent, Norman Wolfe, Michael Collins, Paul Henessey, John Davis, John Salisbury, Jeremy Rose, Frank Startup, Edward Broadly, Jim Byrne, Jason Lidiard, Ronald Moss, Dennis Saville, Christine & Alec Mann, Elizabeth Gregory, John McVicar, Alf Stead, John Marshall, Arthur Blood, Tom Sim, Matthew & Jean Sprott, John Stiles, Harry C Ross, Doreen Hubbard, George Patmore, George O'Reilly, Mike Mansley, Jim Roche, Robert Tolliday, Maria & Lars Roth, Eddie McGinley, Ian Patience, Margaret North, John Byrd, Philippe Peerboom, Ken Shaw, Gerard Ormesher, Thomas Hirschmann, Ron Holder, Anna Monaghan, Edgar Lawson, John Bignell, Barbara Holmes, Sylvia Lawrence, Alf Plumber, Geoffrey Robinson, Wally Oldfield, Reg Davis, Neil Robinson, Arnold Pope, Bert Bishop, Michael Tyce, Lars Schinnerling, E. J. Osinga, Desmond Hellier, Ian Arnott, Tom Maher, Robert Sharp, Vera Campbell, Brian Sellers, R. F. Thorpe, June Manton, Roy Irvine, Nico v d Seyp, Klaus Halm, Matthew Conroy, Maggie Ryan, Pete Rossiter, J Cook, A J Booth, Lew S Grassby.

DEATHS

With sadness I draw members' attention to the passing of the following members - Peter Monaghan (Glasgow), John Beattie (Stoke Fleming, Devon).

Peter was a long time member of the club and we learnt of his passing from his widow Anna Monaghan. Anna continues as a member and she told us of Peter's dedicated interest in Bing's recordings and career. Another great collector has gone by. We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Peter and John.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS VOLS 1 and 2 – SEPIA 1111 - 1122

Volumes 1 and 2 of these CDs remain available from me with the price having been increased by 50p due to a rise in production costs. £6.50 UK, £7 for the rest of Europe. US and Canadian members should contact Wig to obtain their copies.

CALENDAR 2009

Ron Bosley's attractive calendar, featuring scenes from Bing's films, is still available from me at £5.75 UK and £6.50 for other European destinations. US/Canadian members should contact Wig to obtain their calendars.

LEEDS 2009

Sunday October 4th 2009 is reserved for our annual meeting and any additional features will be announced in September.

Until summer, my kindest regards to all members.

Michael Crampton

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2008

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions and donations	9410	Production of BING magazine	9727
Sales - Calendars	1744	Calendars	1885
Leeds meeting - receipts	333	AGM (Leeds) costs	436
Sales – Books	25	Secretarial costs	238
Sales – Sepia CDs	3167	Sepia CDs - costs	3725
Sales - Jonzo CDs	80	Jonzo CDs	105
Sales – Woodbury CDs	570	Woodbury CD costs	1034
Sales - Back issues	9	Editorial costs	92
Advert	2	Postage – books & back issues	15
Bank Interest 2008	9	Refund	15
Bank balance 31/12/2007	9468	Bank balance 31/12/2008	7545
	24817		24817

Note:

1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary and amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. In addition to the sums shown in the accounts there will be a further £1200 income arising in 2009 from Woodbury CD sales and approximately £1400 from sales of Sepia CDs vols. 1 and 2.
3. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2009.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

White Christmas back on the big screen in the UK

Much to our surprise (and delight) Bing's film *White Christmas* returned to cinemas in the UK just in time for the 2008 festive season. Unlike previous cinema re-issues of the film, for its latest return to the big screen *White Christmas* underwent a complete digital restoration, ensuring that it looked as vibrant as it did on its original cinema release (if not better).

The re-issue was handled by Park Circus, the UK's leading distributor of classic and back catalogue films for cinema exhibition. The digitally-restored *White Christmas* played at 72 Cineworld sites across the UK, plus a number of independent cinemas such as London's Curzon Mayfair, from December 12. The new print of the film was also previewed as part of the Cinecity film festival in Brighton on Sunday December 7.

Your editor and his wife duly attended the Cineworld Cinema in Didsbury, Manchester for the 8:20 p.m. performance. We had reserved tickets even though I expected the cinema to be half empty. The first surprise at the multiplex was the long line of people waiting to gain entrance to Screen 6. I expressed amazement at this to the young usherette and she said that it had been like this all day. She had watched the movie for the first time in her life at the early afternoon performance and had been moved to tears by the finale. We took our seats and realised that the performance was completely sold out. The audience comprised people of all ages and complete strangers were chatting before the film started. The couple next to us were familiar with the film from its frequent TV showings on Christmas Day mornings but the lady said that she could never watch it properly because she was always pre-occupied with preparing the turkey.

As to the film itself, what a difference a large screen and top class sound system makes. Early on, when Bing sings "White Christmas" on a European battlefield, you could have heard a pin drop as his deep dulcet tones delivered his most famous song. The sound system really embellished Bing's voice whether singing or speaking.

Watching the film again, I was struck by how good Bing's acting was in his one-to-one scenes with his co-stars. The warmth and sincerity of his scenes with Rosemary Clooney were outstanding and reminded me - if any reminder were needed - of one of the reasons for his long-standing appeal to audiences everywhere. The scene with Dean Jagger when Bing reads him the letter from Washington was also spell-binding.

So we came to the finale and as the cast sang "White Christmas", I could hear voices all over the auditorium joining in. The closing credits came up to spontaneous and sustained applause. It's been a long time since I heard applause in a cinema! Ken Crossland and Michael Crampton had similar experiences when they saw the film in their locale.

I have written to Cineworld congratulating them on their initiative in showing the film and suggesting they could show the colorized version of *Holiday Inn* next year.

Still on the subject of *White Christmas*, Paramount is planning a re-release of the DVD in 2009. Interviews and filming for extras on the DVD took place in Augusta, KY on December 19 at The Rosemary Clooney House which is home to the largest collection of *White Christmas* memorabilia in the world. Interviews were conducted with Nick Clooney, Gail Darley, Mica Darley and Steve and Heather French Henry. The producer of the new material for the DVD also hopes to conduct additional interviews with family of the movie's stars and remaining cast members. In addition to the interviews, they filmed the "White Christmas" parade and spent time going through the collection which includes: Bing's uniform; Rosemary's red robe: Vera's white Mandy outfit; Mary Wickes, Vera Ellen and Rosemary's dresses from the cast party scene; the rhinestone gloves from "Love You Didn't Do Right By Me"; a blue fan from the Sisters routine; and both Rosemary's and Vera's 'Sisters' dresses.

Matt Connor of the Lock Haven Express, PA had a major article about Rosemary Clooney and *White Christmas* in the December 24 edition which had some mentions of Bing and here are some excerpts:

Christmas with Rosemary Clooney

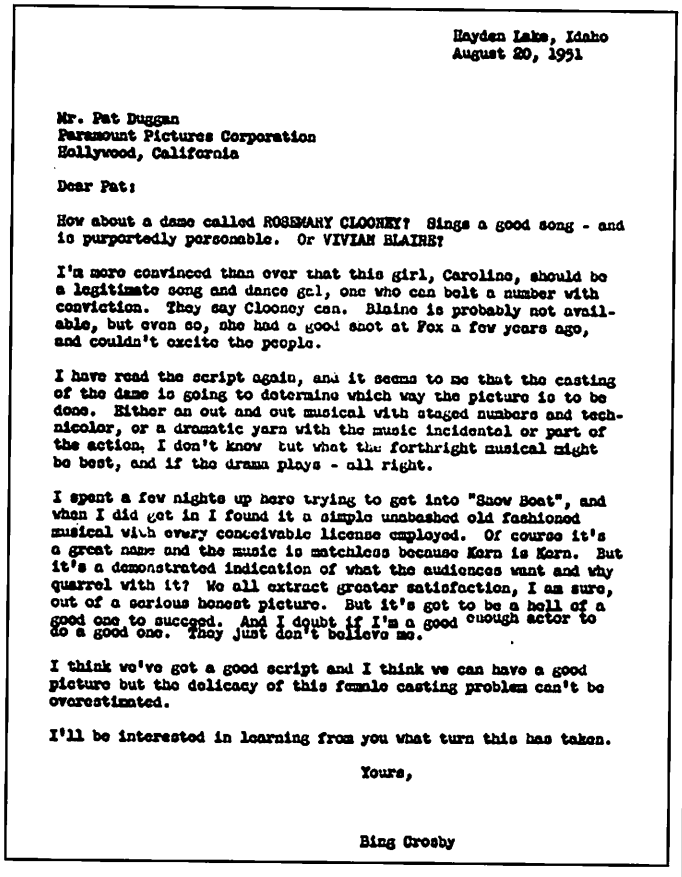
For me, and for millions of people around the world *White Christmas* and, by extension, Rosemary Clooney, represented an essential part of the holiday season. Over the last 54 years, its appeal has only become stronger: Last week the live theatrical production of *White Christmas* was the number one show on Broadway, and

the DVD of the movie was the number one musical comedy on sale at Amazon.com.

Made at a cost of $4 million when it was first released on movie screens in 1954, the movie took in $30 million in total domestic box office grosses that year. Adjusted for inflation, population growth and purchasing trends, that represents, by some estimates, $233 million in current dollars.

Being in *White Christmas* changed Rosemary's life forever, and she owed her appearance in the film to Bing Crosby, who suggested her for the role of Betty Haynes.

"How about a dame called Rosemary Clooney?" Bing wrote to the brass at Paramount Pictures during the initial round of casting for the film. "Sings a good song – and is purportedly personable."



Hayden Lake, Idaho
August 20, 1951

Mr. Pat Duggan
Paramount Pictures Corporation
Hollywood, California

Dear Pat:

How about a dame called ROSEMARY CLOONEY? Sings a good song - and is purportedly personable. Or VIVIAN BLAINE?

I'm more convinced than ever that this girl, Caroline, should be a legitimate song and dance gal, one who can belt a number with conviction. They say Clooney can. Blaine is probably not available, but even so, she had a good shot at Fox a few years ago, and couldn't excite the people.

I have read the script again, and it seems to me that the casting of the dame is going to determine which way the picture is to be done. Either an out and out musical with staged numbers and technicolor, or a dramatic yarn with the music incidental or part of the action. I don't know but what the forthright musical might be best, and if the drama plays - all right.

I spent a few nights up here trying to get into "Show Boat", and when I did get in I found it a simple unabashed old fashioned musical with every conceivable license employed. Of course it's a great name and the music is matchless because Kern is Kern. But it's a demonstrated indication of what the audiences want and why quarrel with it? We all extract greater satisfaction, I am sure, out of a serious honest picture. But it's got to be a hell of a good one to succeed. And I doubt if I'm a good enough actor to do a good one. They just don't believe me.

I think we've got a good script and I think we can have a good picture but the delicacy of this female casting problem can't be overestimated.

I'll be interested in learning from you what turn this has taken.

Yours,

Bing Crosby

She was signed to a seven-year contract but made just a handful of movies for the studio. Some of them were hits, but none of them were as big as *White Christmas*.

"This was the picture I wanted to do more than any other, with my friend Bing Crosby, my friend Danny Kaye and my friend Vera Ellen" Rosemary said on the commentary track of the 2000 DVD release of the movie. "All the people that were close to me."

All that said, *White Christmas* isn't perfect, and its weaknesses lie largely in its often contrived script, which benefitted hugely from Crosby's 1950s hipster ad-libbing (bandleader Artie Shaw called Bing "the first hip white guy in America").

Though she loved the movie dearly, Rosemary was the first to acknowledge the script's inadequacies, laughing over taxicabs that magically appear in otherwise vacant alleys and some oddly illogical behavior by her own character.

But overall the film represents the pinnacle of the old studio system's expertise and professionalism. Directed by Michael Curtiz, who also gave the world *Mildred Pierce* and *Casablanca*, it featured a sparkling collection of songs by Irving Berlin, gorgeous costumes by Edith Head, crystalline Vistavision color photography and brilliant choreography by Bob Alton.

. . . *White Christmas* was the showcase movie for Paramount the year it was released, and as such the set was visited by a galaxy of celebrities, from Humphrey Bogart and Jerry Lewis to Marlene Dietrich, as well a couple of foreign dignitaries.

"I was there when the king of Greece showed up," said veteran Hollywood columnist James Bacon, now 95. "Bing fled when the king was there. I didn't think he liked that kind of publicity."

In fact, according to Rosemary, Bing had other reasons for leaving the set early that day. In a retrospective interview she granted for the 2000 release of the *White Christmas* DVD, she said the long, complicated finale of the movie was finally in the can when director Curtiz told the cast and crew that the king and queen of Greece were coming to visit, and that they should all pretend to re-shoot the finale to give the royal couple something to remember.

"And I hear Bing beside me groan and say, 'Not me,'" Rosemary said. The crooner instead decided to go "over the wall" and spend the afternoon playing golf. Crosby being Crosby – he was then one of the top box office stars in the world – nobody raised an eyebrow.

Matt Connor

(Editor: Interesting to see that Bing wrote recommending Rosemary for the role as early as August 1951. It was May 1952 before Bing had Rosemary as a guest on his radio show and we know from previous stories that they had only met for the first time earlier that month.

Martin McQuade was one of many members who saw the White Christmas stage show in December and he now sends us his report.)

Irving Berlin's White Christmas

This reporter recently had the privilege to see *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* at The Marquis Theater on Broadway. My gratitude is extended to Mr. Joseph Perrotta of Boneau/Bryan-Brown for making the arrangements for me to see the most popular production on The Great White Way during the holiday season. The show was a marvelously old fashioned – and in these times a much needed - excursion back to the days of theatrical diversions with boisterous dance numbers, dazzling sets and costumes and a bounty of heavenly

melodies. The talented cast radiated an infectious enthusiasm. I must single out Stephen Bogardus in the Crosby role. A veteran of many Broadway dramas and musicals, he was able to convey both the altruistic charm and tough minded show business shrewdness of his predecessor.

Several departures from the movie were evident. The play opens on Christmas Eve 1944 with Bob Wallace and Phil Davis already a team singing "Happy Holiday" and the title tune. There is a quick transition to 1954 and the team is headlining on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, produced by a former army buddy. They sing "Let Yourself Go" with the ensemble. A Berlin song new to these ears, "Love and the Weather" is sung by Bob and Betty Haynes in their adjoining dressing rooms to underline their blossoming acquaintance. "Sisters" is not performed by Wallace and Davis until Act Two at the Inn. "Snow" is sung in a train car by the principals along with fellow travelers.

The General's name is changed from Tom to Henry Waverly and his granddaughter, now 10 years old, joins Bob on "Count Your Blessings". The housekeeper has been rechristened Martha Watson, an old vaudeville trouper. She sings "What Can You Do with a General" with Wallace and Davis, as well as "Let Me Sing and I'm Happy" as a solo with the ensemble and another obscure song "Falling Out of Love Can Be Fun" with Betty. Martha spreads the misunderstanding that unhinges the romance; in this case that Bob wants to buy the inn, undermining the general. "Blue Skies" is sung by Bob during a large production number. A cross reference to the movie *Blue Skies* is provided when Bob sings "How Deep Is the Ocean" in counterpoint to Betty's rendition to "Love You Didn't Do Right by Me".

Just before the final curtain the general receives the news that he has been invited back into service but he declines while reiterating the instruction "Count Your Blessings". Other musical additions include "I Love a Piano" and the grand finale "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm" after which fabricated snowflakes drifted down onto the enthralled audience. The only omission was "Gee I Wish I Was back in The Army"; but this is a meager complaint in light of the myriad delectable pleasures inherent in this captivating nostalgic experience. Let's hope that this confection becomes a Broadway yuletide tradition.

Martin McQuade

The top Christmas songs – Bing's still top

On December 12, NBC ran a special looking at the top Christmas songs and it was very pleasing to see Bing coming in at No. 1 with "White Christmas". The version of "White Christmas" shown was from *Happy Holidays with Bing & Frank*, the 1957 color film of Sinatra's ABC-TV Christmas show. Bing was also placed at #7 with the David Bowie duet "Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth".

The previous week, NBC had a similar special counting down the *Top 25 Holiday Moments from Film & TV* and Bing's 'White Christmas' scene from *Holiday Inn* came in at number 18.

Third annual Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival

As its yearly holiday gift to the greater Spokane community, the Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater presented their third annual Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival on Friday, Dec. 5, 2008, at the Bing Crosby Theater, Sprague & Lincoln in downtown Spokane. The event was free and open to the public, though a $1 contribution was requested to support the activities of the non-profit Advocates organization.

The Advocates were especially keen to invite young people and student groups to come and see some of Bing's films and learn about Spokane's own Harry Lillis Crosby, who got his show business start at that very theater, known then as the Clemmer Theater

In addition to the showing of vintage Bing films, the day-long events included a brief multi-media presentation about Bing in Spokane by Stephanie Plowman, special collections librarian at Gonzaga University, prior to the showing of each film (Gonzaga has the largest public collection of Crosby materials in the nation). Bing's nephews Howard and Ed Crosby were on hand, together with the board of Directors to welcome visitors who came for the 7 p.m. show.

Stephanie tells us that 686 people attended throughout the day with the breakdown being:

10 a.m. Going My Way	53
1 p.m. White Christmas	194
4 p.m. Road To Utopia	86
7 p.m. White Christmas	352

Bing Crosby memorabilia was on display at the theater, Gonzaga University's singing group The Big Bing Theory performed holiday and Bing Crosby songs in the evening, books by Kathryn Crosby and Carolyn Schneider (Bing's niece) were available for purchase and there were even special Bing candy bars available for a $4 donation (they make great stocking stuffers!).

The Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater (ABCT) was formed in 2006 to rename, with the theater owner's permission, the Old Clemmer for the famed performer who launched his career there. The organization operates under non-profit status and accepts donations to continue the work of preserving the historic building and maintaining the legacy of Bing Crosby. For information, contact wstimson2@aol.com or call (509) 467-0157.

Bing in the Western Way Hall of Fame

The Western Music Association (www.westernmusic.com/) exists to foster the popularity of western music and they recently inducted Bing into their Hall of Fame. This is what they had to say about it in the Fall edition of their magazine.

Bing Crosby was the 20th century's first multi-media superstar: a star on radio, in movies and in music. In the 1920s, he was a vocalist with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, the ground-breaking jazz band. Soon, he set the pace for solo crooners who were to come later, selling millions of records (he had 38 No.1 singles, which surpassed even Elvis Presley and The Beatles). He began work in films in the 1930s, another successful part of his career that continued into the 1960s.

His influence in the entertainment field, including his influence on Western singers, was unparalleled. In 1962, Crosby became the first recipient of the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. He has been inducted into the halls of fame for both radio and popular music, and has won 5 Academy Awards.

Bing in western mode.

A Westerner himself, Bing Crosby loved the out- of-doors. In 1943, he bought a cattle ranch in Elko, NV, and in 1948 was named Honorary Mayor of Elko, a title he held until his death. He also loved Western music. Because of his widespread popularity, he was hugely influential in expanding the audience for Western music, more so than many people realize. In 1933, he had a bigger hit (charting at #2) with "The Last Roundup" than Gene Autry did (Gene's reached #12), and he had the first real hit recording of "Home on the Range" the same year. Later in the 1930s and into the 1940s, Crosby had bigger hits with numerous western songs than singing movie cowboys did, thereby exposing a large and very receptive audience to Western music and laying the groundwork for its acceptance among fans beyond the country genre.

Crosby's recorded output was enormous, to say the least. That's not so unusual for a major entertainer, but the sheer volume of his Western recordings can be seen in the following example. In 1995, a record company decided to issue a CD of Crosby's Western records. That CD had 25 songs, and there were many more that had to be left out. He recorded Cindy Walker's first song, "Lone Star Trail," and had major hits with "New San Antonio Rose," "Sierra Sue," "Along the Navajo Trail," "Mexicali Rose," "The Singing Hills," "Mule Train" and many others. He also sold over a million records of "Don't Fence Me In," "Deep in the Heart of Texas," "San Fernando Valley," "I'm an Old Cowhand" and "Pistol Packin' Mama."

But his most important contribution to Western music was expanding its audience. In 1936, he invited the Sons of the Pioneers to appear in his movie, *Rhythm on the Range*, where they introduced "I'm an Old Cowhand," and Crosby introduced "Empty Saddles." In the 1940s, Crosby continued to record hit Western songs, and, as if to show his respect for the talent and acceptability of Western musicians, he enjoyed inviting the Cass County Boys to perform at his home parties. He played a major role in facilitating the acceptance of Western music as an important part of American popular culture, rather than simply as a niche genre.

O. J. Sikes

Western Way - Fall 2008 edition

(Editor: Our thanks to Pat Shields for telling us about this honour for Bing.)

BING #149 – Front cover picture

Greg Van Beek has been able to answer the query posed in Tony Peverett's letter in the last issue about the origins of the cover photo on BING 149. Greg advises that this comes from the set of Bing's 1964 appearance on the Bell Telephone Hour TV show. Bing is standing in front of Buddy Cole's piano, during what surely was their last on camera appearance together. This was taped shortly before Buddy's untimely death.

Bing on Facebook

Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, colleagues, join groups and networks. There are over 60 million people using Facebook and probably most of

these are younger than the average ICC member.

Judy Schmid saw the opportunity to bring Bing to this generation and on behalf of Bing Crosby Enterprises she recently set up a Bing Crosby page. Within weeks, many people joined the pages and as we went to press, there were almost 2100 fans from all over the world and most of these were younger people. To see more, go to:
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

There are several Bing related groups as well and we have set up a Bing Crosby (ICC) group to link through to the club.

A Bing Crosby Discography

One of our members, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie) has updated his discography at: http://www.jazzdiscography.com/Artists/Crosby/crosby.html A number of new CDs have been added and there has been a major expansion with the addition of the KMH and Philco radio shows (which include listings of many LPs) and film soundtracks. It is still a work in progress, and corrections and suggestions are most welcome. Jarbie wishes to make it clear that he is not competing with any other Bing discographies, as his is distinctively different and fills a niche of its own. Those with access to the Internet will find it very interesting.

Bing Crosby: 100 Posthumous Television Appearances, Tributes, and Family Guest Shots 1977-2008

Greg Van Beek has been doing some more research.

Even though it will be thirty-two years this October since Bing Crosby left us (almost the span of his entire movie career), Bing has stayed relatively active on the small screen. From the moment his death was announced on October 14, 1977, when all three major networks in the USA devoted individual hour-long tribute broadcasts following their 10pm newscasts, television has continued to feature Bing, albeit in some cases fleetingly, each year right up to the present day. There have been countless airings of his feature films over the years, which no doubt has contributed to his longevity, garnering new interest from subsequent generations. Each year, despite his name being withdrawn from the title in the mid 1980's, the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am pays homage to the man who pioneered celebrity golf on television some fifty years ago. Of course, there were more lengthy tributes in the first few years following Bing's death, but his name is still evoked today during the telecasts (which now take place in February rather than in January). His family, namely widow Kathryn and daughter Mary have done numerous guest appearances on television shows and documentaries to discuss their husband and father respectively. Kathryn Crosby even joined Bing's 'road' foil Bob Hope for a duet of "Silver Bells" on Hope's 1979 Christmas special.

As a sort of post-script to the book I co-authored with Malcolm Macfarlane and the late Lionel Pairpoint, *The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television* (of which a few copies are still available through the ICC), I've compiled a list of 100 television programs Bing and his family have appeared on since his passing. It's by no means meant to be definitive or to be considered complete, but it serves its purpose by illustrating a good cross-section of what type(s) of shows have been using footage of, or have paid tribute to Bing, or have featured members of the Crosby family as guests. See how many of these you recall watching:

1.) Bob Hope: On the Road With Bing 10/28/77 NBC-TV
2.) Clapperboard 11/?/77 BBC-TV (tribute to Bing)
3.) America Salutes the Queen 11/29/77 NBC-TV with tribute to Bing, who was to have co-hosted
4.) Grammy Awards 3/?/78 CBS-TV Andy Williams, Mary Crosby and Bob Hope pay tribute
5.) Bing Crosby: His Life and Legend 5/25/78 ABC-TV
6.) Happy Birthday, Bob (Hope) 5/29/78 CBS-TV with Kathryn Crosby and tributes to Bing
7.) Bing Crosby: The Christmas Years 12/6/78 CBS-TV
8.) A Bing Crosby Christmas- Just Like the Ones We Used to Know 12/6/79 CBS-TV
9.) Bob Hope Christmas Special 12/13/79 NBC-TV with Kathryn Crosby
10.) Hope, Women and Song 1/?/80 NBC-TV with Kathryn Crosby and tribute to Bing
11.) Bob Hope 30th Anniversary in TV special 1/19/81 NBC-TV with TV clips of Bing
12.) Christmas Gold 12/?/82 NBC-TV with clips of Crosby Christmas shows
13.) Bob Hope's Road To Hollywood 3/2/83 NBC-TV with Bing segment
14.) Happy Birthday Bob Hope 5/23/83 NBC-TV with Kathryn Crosby
15.) Perry Como's Christmas In New York 12/17/83 ABC-TV with tribute to Bing
16.) Bob Hope's Hilarious Unrehearsed Antics of the Stars 9/?/84 NBC-TV with Bing featured
17) Here's Television Entertainment 12/4/83 NBC-TV Bob Hope pays tribute to Bing
18.) "Little Drummer Boy" Music Video, released in 1984
19.) Hollywood Greats: "BING", narrated by Barry Norman, 1985 BBC-TV
20.) NBC's 60th Anniversary Special 5/12/86 NBC-TV with clips of Bing
21.) LIFE magazine's 50th Anniversary Show 11/15/86 ABC-TV with clips of Bing
22.) Remembering Bing 12/87 PBS-TV
23.) Evening At Pops: Perry Como Salutes Bing Crosby 8/88 PBS-TV
24.) Happy Birthday, Bob: 50 Stars Salute Your 50 Years with NBC 5/16/88 NBC-TV
25.) The Cole Porter Story 7/23/90 PBS-TV with clips of Bing

26.) Bob Hope's Christmas Show 12/15/90 NBC-TV with Bing "White Christmas"
27.) Crosby Clambake 50th Anniversary Special 6/17/91 TNN
28.) Bob Hope and Friends: Making New Memories 9/12/91 with Bing featured
29.) The Magic of Bing Crosby, Part 1 (1991) PBS
30.) The Best of the Hollywood Palace 11/25/92 ABC-TV
31.) Holiday Greetings From the Ed Sullivan Show 12/20/92 CBS-TV
32.) Bing - His Legendary Years (1993) Disney Channel
33.) Perry Como In Concert 3/10/93 Tokyo TV with Bing tribute medley
34.) More of The Best of The Hollywood Palace 5/11/93 ABC-TV
35.) Bob Hope: The First 90 Years 5/14/93 NBC-TV with Bing featured
36.) Hollywood Babylon 10/17/93 "Daddy Dearest" VH-1 TV
37.) Bing Crosby: America's Crooner 12/14/93 A&E
38.) Bob Hope's Bagful of Christmas Memories 12/15/93 NBC-TV with Bing segment
39.) Television Christmas Classics 12/23/94 CBS-TV
40.) Bob Hope's Memories of WW2 8/5/95 NBC-TV with footage of Bing
41.) Rosemary Clooney's Demi-centennial 11/11/95 A&E with tributes to Bing and Bob Hope
42.) Nostalgia Holiday Album 12/2/95 NOSTALGIA channel with special salute to Bing
43.) Family Film Awards 8/22/96 CBS-TV Bob Hope honored; clips of Bing
44.) Funniest Comedy Duos 9/7/96 NBC-TV with Bing and Bob
45.) The Life and Music of Irving Berlin 9/20/97 BRAVO with clips of Bing
46.) TV Guide Looks at Christmas 11/29/97 USA network guests incl. Mary Crosby, with clips of Bing
47.) Bob Hope A&E biography 1/4/98
48.) Entertainment Tonight 4/29/98 with Kathryn Crosby's tour of Bing's estate
49.) Bob Hope- Road to The Top 5/26/98 AMC
50.) VH-1 "Pop-up video" Little Drummer Boy Bing and Bowie 1998
51.) Mysteries and Scandals 12/?/98 E! Channel profiling Bing
52.) Bob Hope Biography 12/?/98 E! Channel
53.) The Crooners 12/?/98 BBC-TV with Bing
54.) Open House With Gloria Hunniford 11/25/99 BBC-TV Kathryn Crosby guests
55.) This Morning 12/13/99 BBC-TV with Kathryn Crosby
56.) Top 10 Christmas 12/24/99 BBC-TV with Kathryn Crosby, Ken Barnes
57.) South Bank Show 12/26/99 BBC-TV profiling Bing: The Voice of the Century
58.) Kennedy Center Honors 12/29/99 CBS-TV Victor Borge honored. Audio from Bing
59.) VH-1 TV's 100 Greatest Rock and Roll Moments 8/3/00 (Bing and David Bowie at #43)
60.) Popular Song: Soundtrack of The Century 8/12/01 BRAVO channel. Bing is profiled
61.) CBS - 50 Years from Television City 4/27/02 with Bing clips
62.) TV commercial for Lexus Sport Utility Vehicle, featuring Bing singing "Let It Snow! Let It Snow" Let It Snow!" (2002)
63.) Bing On Bing 12/25/02 BBC-TV October films documentary on Bing
64.) American Music Awards 1/13/03 ABC-TV with clips of Bing's 1974 Award of Merit presentation
65.) 100 Musical Moments That Rocked TV 1/16/03 VH-1 TV with Bing and David Bowie
66.) Living Famously 1/23/03 BBC-TV "Bing Crosby"
67.) Kathryn Crosby in Brooklyn 2/15/03 (local TV affiliate)
68.) Mwah! The Best of The Dinah Shore Show 3/5/03 PBS-TV with 1963 medley by Bing and Dinah

Bing guests on Dinah's show in 1963

69.) TMJ4 News 4/11/03 NBC-TV Kathryn Crosby and Buddy Bregman are interviewed in Milwaukee
70.) TMJ4 News 4/12/03 NBC-TV coverage of Irish Fest Crosby Centennial Celebration in Milwaukee
71.) 100 Years of (Bob) Hope and Humor 4/20/03 NBC-TV with clips of Bing
72.) The Today Show 6/2/03 NBC-TV Kathryn Crosby interviewed by Katie Couric
73.) Various news coverage of Bob Hope's death 7/28/03
74.) Larry King Live 7/29/03 CNN with Kathryn Crosby
75.) Larry King Live 8/27/03 CNN with Kathryn Crosby
76.) The Nick At Nite Holiday Special 11/28/03 Nickelodeon channel with Bing and Clay Aiken duet
77.) TV commercial for Lexus Sport Utility Vehicle featuring Bing singing "Let It Snow! Let It Snow" Let It Snow!" (2003)
78.) Larry King Live 12/25/03 CNN Bing Crosby remembered with Kathryn Crosby, Mary Frances Crosby, Nathaniel Crosby, Andy Williams, Celeste Holm. Taped 10/4/03
79.) Andy Williams: My Favorite Duets 3/7/04 PBS-TV (includes 1966 medley with Bing)
80.) Fever: The Music of Peggy Lee 3/13/04 PBS-TV (includes 1968 duet with Bing)
81.) AFI 100 Greatest Film Songs 6/22/04 CBS-TV (Bing has 3 songs)
82.) Bing Crosby Breeder's Cup Race at Del Mar 7/25/04 ESPN Kathryn presents the award

83.) Great Lodges of the Canadian Rockies 7/25/04 PBS incl. footage of Bing's visit to Jasper Park
84.) Nick and Jessica's Family Christmas 12/1/04 ABC-TV with Bing duet on 'White Christmas'
85.) Christmas At The Hollywood Palace 12/9/04 PBS-TV with Bing and Family
86.) The Tony Danza Show 12/7/04 NBC-TV with Kathryn Crosby
87.) The Christmas Special Christmas Special 12/14/04 BRAVO with Mary Crosby
88.) Guess Who Lived Here 9/18/05 HGTV with Bing's boyhood home in Spokane
89.) Good Morning America 30th Anniversary 11/3/05 ABC-TV (Bing sings 'Jingle Bells' in 1976)
90.) 100 Greatest Things About The Holidays 12/1 and 12/2/05 BRAVO Bing at #31
91.) TV Land's Top 10 Holiday Moments 12/11/05 TV LAND with Bing at #7
92.) High Tech Hitler 2/12/06 HISTORY Channel. Bing and Magnetic tape profiled
93.) Barbara Walters: 30 Mistakes In 30 Years 11/16 and 11/17/06 ABC-TV with Bing
94.) JC Penney Commercial featuring a "rap" version of Bing's 'Here Comes Santa Claus' 12/06
95.) CBS Sunday Morning 12/17/06 CBS-TV with Bing featured
96.) CBS Sunday Morning 12/24/06 CBS-TV with segment on Bing's 'White Christmas'
97.) Les Paul: Chasing Sound 7/11/07 PBS-TV with segment on Bing and Les
98.) Movies Rock 12/7/07 CBS-TV with a tribute to Bing's 'White Christmas'
99.) Greatest Holiday Moments: TV and Film Countdown 12/5/08 NBC-TV Bing at #18
100.) Greatest Holiday Moments: Songs of the Season Countdown 12/12/08 NBC-TV Bing at #17 and #1

Greg Van Beek

"Step aside!" – Nathaniel Crosby remembers the Palladium concerts

Your Editor and his wife, Pat, got tired of the miserable British winter and spent two weeks in Florida in January. Through the good offices of Judy Schmid, I was put in contact with **Nathaniel Crosby**, Bing's youngest son (now aged 47), and he kindly invited Pat and I to his lovely home in a gated community in North Palm Beach. We carried an in-depth article about Nathaniel in BING, summer 2008 (#149) but nevertheless a little more background is probably in order.

Most members will recall that Nathaniel was the youngest winner of the US Amateur Golf Championship at the age of 19 until a certain Tiger Woods achieved that distinction. At the age of 16, he had to take over the running of his father's Pro-Am at Pebble Beach and after graduating from the University of Miami in 1984 with a Bachelors degree in Political Science, he had a spell on the European Tour from 1985 to 1987 as a professional golfer. He describes his stint on the European tour as resulting in as they say on Wall Street "negative trending" as he finished 87th on the money list in year one, 105th in year two and 155th in year three. He is however proud of a 3rd place finish in the Portuguese Open where he was tied with Seve Ballesteros with 5 holes to play only for both of them to lose to Warren Humphries.

He then went into business and in 1988 he organized a group that purchased the Toney Penna Golf Company. Nathaniel acted as President until 1992, when Toney Penna Golf was reorganized to form the Nicklaus Golf Equipment Company.

Between 1992-1998, Nathaniel acted as President of Nicklaus Golf, setting up an exclusive retail network city by city and hiring a regional sales force to grow the company. The company began at $7 million the first year and grew at a 30% growth rate finishing the 1998 calendar year at $24 million in sales.

He left Nicklaus for Orlimar Golf in January 1998 and initiated the concept of Orlimar Golf's direct response campaign, an effort that took the company from $1 million (in gross sales) to more than $100 million (in gross sales) in less than a year. Crosby remained on the board of Orlimar Golf through 2002 and acted as a consultant. In 2003, Nathaniel founded Surf N Turf, LLC and partnered with Greg Norman in an ongoing effort to consolidate independent golf retailers. Together with Greg, he is an adviser to GPS Industries, a global media and technology solutions company.

In recent years, Nathaniel has acted as a consultant on a number of prestigious golf linked ventures and he was immersed in another complicated project when I called on him. This is a "destination club" where he will be raising money for "small bite" private clubs where 60 members will share 15 homes that are linked to private golf clubs that are specific to a region. Members will have reciprocity with "sister clubs" on a space available basis. He hopes to organize over 15 regional clubs that will access over 60 of the best private clubs in the country. In simple terms, it can be thought of as "high end" time share ties to private golf. Nathaniel expects to launch the project late this spring.

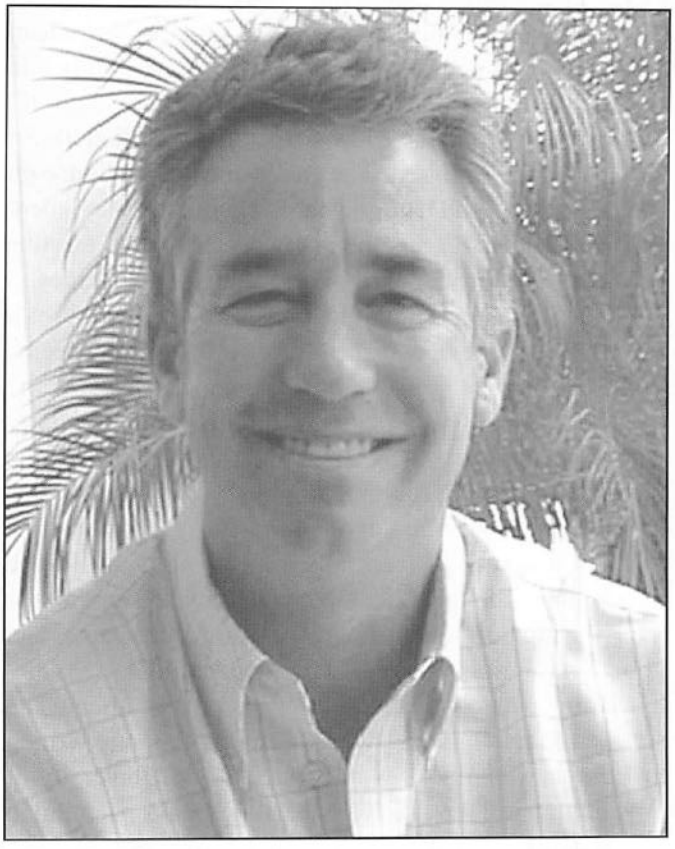
I mentioned to Nathaniel that the last time I had seen him "in the flesh" was on the opening night of Bing's Palladium concerts in 1976 when he was singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat". He smiled as he recalled the event and said how he had sprung a surprise on his father on the first night after some preliminary banter by adlibbing "Step aside" which caused great hilarity with the band members. This was used on subsequent nights and can be heard on the album put out by Ken Barnes. Nathaniel sometimes varied the ad lib in an effort to catch his father out.

I mentioned my surprise that Bing had started to perform live again at that time and I wondered what the motivation for this was. Nathaniel was not certain of the reason but the family act segment grew out of something

they put together for a benefit for the Houston Symphony Association in January 1976. Recalling the Houston event, Nathaniel told me of an incident mentioned in golfer Jackie Burke Jr.'s book *It's Only a Game*. On page 94, Burke (who is Nathaniel's godfather) tells of Bing rehearsing a Mexican song and having trouble with a particular phrase. Bing was being encouraged to play golf at the Champions Golf Club but would not do so until he had 'nailed' the phrase. So Bing found a Mexican singer who knew the song and asked her to come to the golf club and help him with his problem. Once he was happy with the song, he went out to play golf. Burke explained that even if one has talent, hard work has to be put in as well and he was using this example in a golfing context in his book.

Until Bing's concerts, Nathaniel's greatest musical influences were Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Carole King and Carly Simon and it was only through appearing with his father did he really discover and appreciate his Dad's music for the first time.

In 1975, Bing and his sons Harry and Nathaniel had toured the UK playing many of the great golf courses. Nathaniel recalled their visit to Turnberry in Scotland where there were long summer nights and floodlights. Nathaniel could not resist the urge to practise his putting until late in the evening but he had neglected to tell his Dad where he was. As it got to be quite late, Bing was very worried and organised search parties to find his missing son and didn't know whether to be cross or proud when Nathaniel eventually appeared around 11:30 p.m.



Nathaniel records his message for the Leeds meeting

Nathaniel had recently seen *The Road to Hong Kong* for the first time on the Cinemax channel. I indicated that it was not the best Road film and he quickly agreed and expressed his doubts about the quality of the screen writing.

I had asked Nathaniel to send a short message on video to our Leeds meeting which is scheduled for later this year and this he duly did.

At the mention of Leeds, Nathaniel recalled that he had played in the Benson & Hedges tournament at York on several occasions but he smiled ruefully as remembered that he had failed to make the cut every time. I mentioned that Alan Fisher had attended one of our meetings in Leeds and Nathaniel spoke very warmly about Alan saying that he probably owed some of his personality to him as well as his Dad. He said that Alan used to spend a lot of his free time at weekends with Nathaniel and his siblings, taking them (and their friends) on outings to the cinema and so on.

Turning to the Pebble Beach Pro-Am, I expressed the view that it was an enormous challenge for a 16-year-old to take over as host of such a big event. In acknowledging this, Nathaniel said that he received a lot of guidance from the existing team particularly as regards the invitations, the handicaps and the allocation of partners. In those days, 168 amateurs were invited plus the top 25 professionals. Nevertheless, Nathaniel found himself negotiating with Deane Beaman, the PGA Tour Commissioner, which for a teenager could not have been easy. Nathaniel acted as sole host until 1983, when his mother joined him in that role. The removal of Bing's name from the tournament was a major disappointment to Nathaniel although he remained involved on the tournament committee until 2002.

Nathaniel thought that the Trustees of Bing's estate at that time may have regarded the Pro-Am as a potential liability instead of an asset because the Trust underwrote the event. If severe weather affected the attendance, the Trust could be left with a loss on its hands. Kathryn Crosby subsequently set up a separate tournament in North Carolina which raised a considerable amount for charity over the years. Nathaniel played in it each year, usually partnering his "lifelong friend" Paul Fulton then the CEO of Sara Lee Corporation, the main sponsor.

We briefly discussed Bing's first family. Nathaniel said that Gary had stayed with the family when Bing was very ill in early 1974 but other than that, he had had very little contact with his half brothers. Nathaniel has not read Gary's book as he would find it too emotional but he understood that overall it portrayed Gary's faults more than his father's. I confirmed that this was so and I recounted my meeting with Phillip Crosby when Phillip acknowledged quite openly that talk of Bing being a cruel father was rubbish. Nathaniel said that it might be nice for some sort of family reunion to take place for the particular benefit of the grandchildren. He has recently been in telephone contact with Janet Crosby (Lindsay's

widow) as she was in Florida at a sports event.

I indicated to Nathaniel that the ICC's aims of preserving Bing's memory and his musical legacy for the benefit of future generations must be the same as the family's with the additional consideration of royalty income which sadly is likely to diminish unless radical action is taken. Nathaniel saw some potential for Bing's name to be linked with golf projects in some way. The restaurants are making a contribution to Bing's public image and other efforts are underway but he felt that it probably needed a family member to attract capital to re-promote his Dad's legacy and make it an entrepreneurial enterprise.

As we know, all three of Bing and Kathryn's children are very busy leading their own lives. Harry used to be an investment banker with Credit Suisse Boston but left a couple of years ago to become a partner in the Snow, Phipps Group, a private equity firm specializing in acquisitions of middle market companies. Mary, of course, has her acting career and young children. So for the time being it seems unlikely that a family member can head a full time business in promoting Bing.

Nathaniel made me very welcome and thanked the ICC members for all they do to promote his father's legacy. His father would be very proud of him.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Spokane man has one of Bing Crosby's last letters

The Spokesman-Review of November 23 carried a very interesting article by Jim Kershner which we have great pleasure in reproducing.

Bing Crosby's last words are well-known:

"That was a great game of golf, fellas," he said, striding off the 18th green at a Madrid golf course, moments before suffering a massive heart attack.

Yet some of his last written words are in the possession of Herb Rotchford Jr., the principal of Shadle Park High School.

Those words are contained in a handwritten letter Bing sent to Herb Rotchford Sr., one of the Spokane-raised star's oldest and dearest childhood friends. It arrived at Rotchford's Hayden Lake, Idaho, home three days after Bing died on Oct. 14, 1977.

Bing had written the letter from London on Oct. 5, 1977. In it he chats about his shows at the London Palladium, his deteriorating golf game and his back problems, caused by a tumble into a Pasadena orchestra pit earlier that year.

Here's the letter, in its entirety:

Dear Herb,
No. I didn't have to have the operation. The medics are very reluctant to go into the back surgically, and they didn't deem it necessary. Not unless a sudden and drastic change occurs. At the moment I seem to be progressing well, if somewhat slowly, doing some concerts and TV here in Europe Chud Wendle (a mutual friend from Spokane) was at the show last nite. Play golf, but badly, of course. Very limited back-swing. But I love these golf courses and lots of good guys to play with. Be home in late October.

Love to all,
Bing

It's a friendly, informal letter made poignant by its timing.

This letter is just a small part of the trove of Bing-related items in several photo albums and scrapbooks passed along to Herb Rotchford Jr. by his father, who died in 1981. It's a mother lode of Crosby memorabilia and artifacts or what aficionados worldwide call "Crosbyana."

The Crosby theme is evident throughout the Rotchford albums for one simple reason: Bing and the elder Rotchford remained close all of their lives.

One of the earliest photos shows Rotchford and Crosby on the same youth basketball team in 1920, when they were teens. The friendship endured even after Rotchford Sr. became a Spokane dentist and Bing went on to become the biggest star in the world.

Sometimes, Rotchford Sr. would go down to Hollywood to visit him. The Rotchford photo albums include snapshots showing Bing and sometimes Rotchford Sr. posing with such luminaries as Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams and William Frawley (Fred Mertz of "I Love Lucy" fame).

More often, it was Bing who came to visit Herb Sr. in the Inland Northwest. The Rotchfords had a house on Hayden Lake, and Bing would sometimes stay there while on visits to his hometown. He came to love Hayden Lake for its golfing and fishing opportunities.

"He liked it so much, he had my father buy him a house on the lake and a Chris-Craft boat, sight unseen," said Rotchford Jr.

From that point on, Crosby and his growing family would spend every August at their place on Hayden Lake. Bing, in his autobiography, "Call Me Lucky," called it an "oasis of enjoyment in a hurly-burly world."

The Rotchfords lived only a few houses away. The family photo album is jammed with snapshots of the two men playing golf together, clowning around together and going on joint boat outings with their families.

Bing was, in fact, Herb Jr.'s godfather. The scrapbook contains another Bing letter, this one written to Herb Jr. when he was in college at the University of Washington in 1969. In this one, Bing speaks his mind in a surprisingly candid fashion about one of the most divisive issues of the day, the Vietnam War:

"It seems to me the government is making noises like they want to get out of Vietnam. I hope they're serious about this, and I know you hope so, too. It would be a great relief, I'm confident.

"It's a silly war, and it doesn't seem to be getting anywhere. Just costing a lot of lives, and a lot of money. Nobody can give you a valid reason why."

He ends the letter with a typical Bing-style ribbing of Herb Jr.'s dad:

"I hear your folks have gone back to Spokane. I suppose this pleases Herb, as he has a number of good golfing pals around there, and it must have been difficult for him to find these kinds of pigeons around Seattle."

The letter is signed, "Always yours, Godfather Bing."

Rotchford Jr. also has a set of golf clubs made especially for Crosby, inscribed with his name. At some point, Bing gave them to Rotchford Sr.

Rotchford Jr. plans on loaning the golf clubs to the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane to be on display for the third annual Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival on Dec. 5.

Those clubs are particularly apt pieces of Crosbyana, since Bing was so closely associated with golf. Yet for Rotchford Jr., they represent just another tangible reminder of "Godfather Bing."

Jim Kershner

(Information from: The Spokesman-Review, http://www.spokesmanreview.com)

Las Vegas the home of the church that Bing Crosby helped build

The Las Vegas Review-Journal of December 19 gave Bing some useful publicity.

Northern Nevada was home to Bing Crosby's seven ranches. His Las Vegas legacy was The Church That Bing Built. Responding to a priest's desperate plea, Crosby, best known for his 100 million-selling song "White Christmas," agreed to perform at a church fundraiser on the Strip less than a year before he died.

Las Vegas resident **Carolyn Schneider** recounts the story in her second book—currently unpublished—about her famous uncle, the legendary crooner who won an Oscar for *Going My Way* in 1944 and teamed up with Bob Hope in seven "Road to" films. The concert took place Nov. 26, 1976, at the Aladdin Theater for the Performing Arts.

"Without a proper church and no money to build one, the priest had been saying Mass in the Sundancer Western Saloon on Boulder Highway," she writes in "Bing: On the Road to Elko."

"With the help of the crew from the MGM, scenery was constructed to transform the interior into a chapel on Sunday mornings. When the saloon was sold and turned into a topless disco, it was too much for Father Benjamin Franzinelli," she wrote.

"The altar boys had to get the (boa) feathers off the bar before they could light the candles," Franzinelli, now a monsignor, told Schneider. That was the last straw. Franzinelli made an appeal to Crosby, a devout Catholic.

The church that Crosby helped build is Holy Family at Mountain Vista Street and Harmon Avenue. A stained glass window commemorates the history, including a nod to the disco with the risqué reputation.

Martin's Miscellany

Martin McQuade sends us some bits and pieces pertaining to Bing.

Bob Hope: Thanks for the Memories, a series held this fall at The Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, was a resounding success. A highlight was a screening of a magnificent print of *The Bob Hope Show* broadcast February 17th, 1969 featuring Hope and Crosby revisiting classic vaudeville routines. Linda Hope graciously appeared on the final day to introduce the A&E biography *Bob Hope: America's Entertainer* in which she gave testimony to the enduring friendship that her father shared with Bing.

As part of profile of Irving Berlin's autograph, the magazine *Pen and Quill* offers a history of *White Christmas* in its November – December 2008 issue. Crosby's signature is also spotlighted, with this statement by the editor. *Crosby was a responsive signer both in – person and to mail requests. During his retirement I received many a letter from him on his personal stationery.* Two examples of Crosby's John Hancock (one identified as *quick*) illustrate the article.

Item of interest: In Robert Rosen's film *Lilith* (1964) there is a startling scene when Warren Beatty longingly gazes into the window of a music store where his former girl friend once worked at which point a promotional photo of Bing Crosby circa 1940 stares back at him while the shot lapses into a lingering dissolve.

An account of the tortuous history of the Broadway production of *Dr. Cook's Garden* is offered in *Rage and Glory: The Volatile Life and Career of George C. Scott* by David Sheward. The actor was hired to direct the play, written by Ira Levin and starring Burl Ives. Levin and Ives rejected Scott's idea that the murderous doctor display some guilt. As a result Scott quit during previews in September, 1967. Warner Brothers' interest in a film version with James Stewart died once dismal notices ensured a run of one week and a loss of $100,000. I wonder what Scott thought of Crosby's complex Doctor Cook.

Martin McQuade

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net .Regular newsletters are issued.

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Regular newsletters are issued. Film nights are scheduled to be held on April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7 and December 2 this year.

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:

www.mcckc.edu/~crosby

A wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

www.BingCrosby.com

This site comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and great clips from Bing's films.

A Bing Crosby Discography

Set up and maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this site can be found at:

http://www.jazzdiscography.com/Artists/Crosby/crosby.html

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

This is a most impressive web site maintained by our member, Crissi Newton. Well worth a look.

Books 'n' Bing

1. Sinatra in Hollywood by Tom Santopietro.

Published by St. Martin's Press, November 2008. Hardcover, 544pp. List price. $29.95. ISBN-13: 9780312362263

Every book about Frank has many references to Bing. The latest is no exception and Martin McQuade tells us more.

Question posed in November 1995 by reporter Mark McEwen to Tina Sinatra on the CBS Morning Show honoring her father's upcoming 80th Birthday: "There are people all over this planet who quake in the footsteps of Frank Sinatra because of the legend that he is. Who made him tremble as he was growing up – people that he really admired and looked up to as he was coming up?"

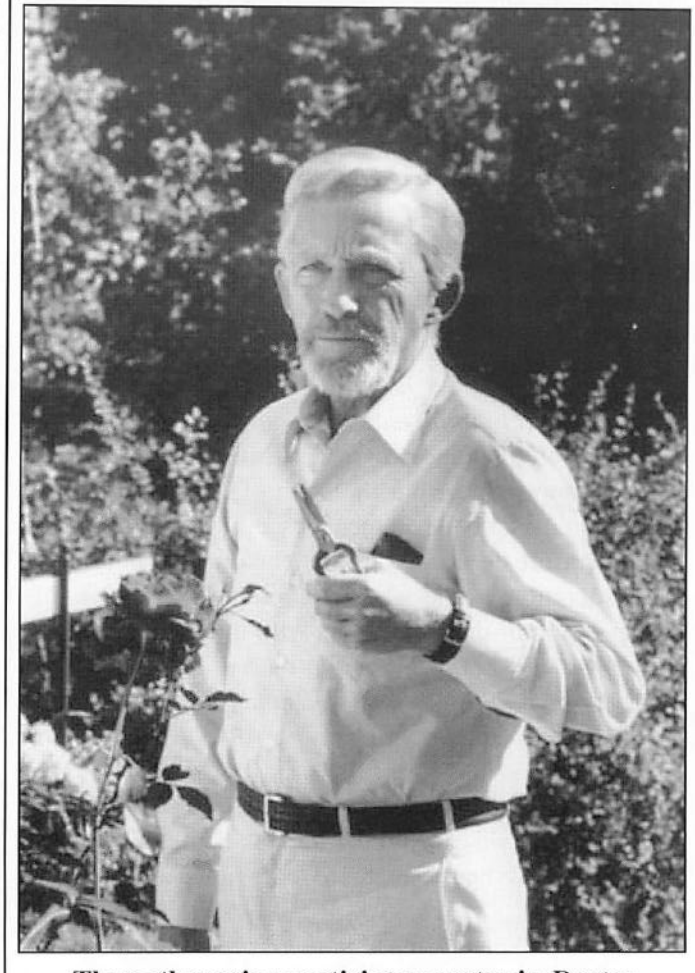
Response: "I think the first name that would come through his mouth would be Bing Crosby. Crosby was his hero."

Why is it so often the case that Sinatra hagiographers demean the very artist whom he invariably championed? They are not content to honor their subject's legitimate and phenomenal achievements; they also feel that they must make unfavorable - and unfair - comparisons to the "older fella;" stake the right to claims that should be made for Crosby in order to burnish the Sinatra legacy; or to appropriate Crosby's pioneering accomplishments. It has often been stated by musicologists that Sinatra's remarkable phrasing derived from studying Tommy Dorsey's trombone technique. Yet they neglect to mention that Dorsey is on record as saying that he arrived at his seamless legato by absorbing Crosby's sound. Must the full circle always be denied? It reminds me of the admonition made by The Wizard of Oz: Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain. There is an unmistakable zeal to establish Sinatra as a solitary Colossus. The achievement of this goal is handicapped by one problem: the presence of Harry Lillis Crosby. Therefore he must be diminished, in fact shoved off the Pantheon which of course only Sinatra is justified to inhabit.

A new book takes great pains to spins this sophistry into truth. *Sinatra in Hollywood* is the name of a recently published study of the film career of Old Blue Eyes. It is published by Thomas Dunne Books of St. Martin's Press and written by Broadway producer and cultural historian Tom Santopietro, who has previously written books on Doris Day and Barbra Streisand. At the outset on page five he notes, just how seriously did Sinatra take his film career? The answer? Very.

"For starters, he was willing to plumb the darkness in a variety of ways, which not only didn't interest other singing actors like Bing Crosby, but also did not speak to other nonmusical Hollywood A – list stars."

This is a startling conclusion. Mr. Santopietro glosses over the fact that Crosby poignantly explored the pains of widowhood and the plight of orphans in post war Europe in *Little Boy Lost*, the psychosis of alcoholism in *The Country Girl*, the trauma of a child custody struggle in *Man on Fire*, the scalding consequences of parental irresponsibility in *The Demon Under the Bed*. There are also his nuanced portraits of two tormented physicians: the besotted yet altruistic Doc Boone in the remake of *Stagecoach* (1966) and the hail–fellow–well–met euthanasia practicing monster in *Doctor Cook's Garden* (1970). It is amazing that such a gallery of risk taking portrayals of tortured souls would escape Mr. Santopietro's attention, given the premium he places on plumbing the darkness.



The euthanasia practicing monster in *Doctor Cook's Garden*

Mr. Santopietro again indulges his need to diminish Crosby in order to elevate Sinatra with this spurious observation.

"Sinatra the actor flashed across Hollywood screens for a full four decades, a run matched by very few stars, and by no others who maintained a similarly

high profile, indeed a legendary career, in another medium".

At this point a jarring exception nags at the author's outlandish claim, one which he feels that he must suppress with this specious afterthought. *"Bing Crosby had a longer run as a top box office attraction, but his string of starring vehicles was neither as long lasting nor as varied as Sinatra's".* Of course Mr. Santopietro can't evade the truth that Crosby's reign for fifteen years in the all important Motion Picture Herald list of the top ten box office stars – and his astounding number one position in that roster for five consecutive year – dwarves Sinatra's albeit respectable total of five placements, never rising above fifth place. He does choose to ignore what a casual glance at Crosby's filmography would reveal: a cascade of stellar cinema triumphs spanning more than four decades from 1931 to 1974, during which time he achieved something which eluded Mr. Sinatra, an Oscar for best actor for *Going My Way*, a prime example of a star taking a bold and varied departure from what was the norm, a turn soon emulated by Sinatra in *The Miracle of the Bells.*

The author does concede the massive impact which Crosby exerted on Sinatra's career.

"The influence of Bing Crosby on Sinatra was enormous; it's not just that Sinatra admired the way Crosby sang. It's that Crosby's success made Frank Sinatra believe that he, too, could succeed as both vocalist and movie star."

He can't refrain from damning with faint praise.

"After all, Crosby, for all his pleasant looks, was not a classically handsome man; if Frank had a scarred neck and worries about a receding hairline, well, Crosby had jutting ears and sported a hairpiece."

It is commonplace to read dismissals of Crosby's physical appearance, but the truth of the matter is that Crosby's face radiated an incandescent glow which in no small measure accounted for his phenomenal popularity for generations. The author attempts to justify his juxtaposition of these two stars with this statement.

"Over the years, their differences and similarities evolved into a low key, pleasantly competitive, and unspoken version of "anything you can do, I can do better."

It is unfortunate that he must always find Sinatra the victor in what was essentially a mock contest.

This trend becomes more egregious as the book continues.

"The crucial difference in their approach, of course, came in how they sang. Crosby was so self contained that it was as if he were singing to himself. Watch him sing "True Love" to Grace Kelly in High Society – he's barely acknowledging her presence as he sings to the horizon. It's a performance in marked contrast to Sinatra's erotic murmur of "You're Sensational" sung directly to Kelly in the same film."

The author derives a false conclusion since the dynamics of each scene couldn't be further apart. One requires a serene connubial assurance, the other demands a playful seductiveness. To infer from this that Crosby was an aloof screen romancer is to deny the sensuality Crosby conveys in numerous musical moments with screen goddesses; typified by Rhonda Fleming when she recalled how intently and soulfully Crosby looked into her eyes during their love duet in *A Connecticut Yankee.*

The author further states the loneliness pouring out of Frank informed his art all along the way, both in the recording studio and on film.

"Bing could be comforting, both on disc and on screen, but there was no mistaking the subtext – he didn't want to know about anyone else's wee small hours of the morning."

He can't be aware of Crosby's extraordinary rendition of that essential screen torch song: "Temptation" in *Going Hollywood* in 1933. It is the first time that a state of dejection and despair was revealed with such harsh candor in a musical film. The raw emotion that roars out of Crosby in this seminal moment surely got under the skin of the young Sinatra, surely keeping him awake way past 3 a.m. It was that very year that a galvanized Sinatra saw Crosby in a live performance and pledged, someday that's going to be me up there.

Elsewhere in his book he writes Bing Crosby was capable of enormous depth, and possessed a beautiful instrument. This undisputable truth is followed by the obligatory disclaimer.

"But he usually preferred to coast on his burnished sound and easy charm, his jazz roots lightly syncopating a majority of his cuts. For Bing, the illusion of ease was all. Sinatra, on the other hand, acted through his singing, wanting to let the entire world take his emotional temperature, whether deliriously happy or mired in anguish."

Why must tonal brilliance, complete naturalness or supreme rhythmic dexterity be minimized? Isn't the illusion of ease basically the expression of honesty and truthfulness and not really that easy to achieve? The truth is that Crosby exposed a startling array of temperaments in his singing, capable of making young girls swoon, cowboys cry, and battle hardened soldiers yearn for home. It is unjust to reduce his protean vocal skills in such a cavalier fashion.

Mr. Santopietro refers to Sinatra's willed nonchalance which he claims served as a buffer to his swinging sexuality. He elaborates by stating of course Sinatra's nonchalance was never so strongly willed as that of Bing Crosby. "Crosby often gave the impression that he'd rather die than have you think that any effort was involved." I'd prefer to call it the art which conceals art, which is quite an estimable goal. James Cagney remembered seeing Crosby appear at a bond rally and

was impressed by his coolness. Only when he went backstage did he realize that Crosby was soaked with perspiration.

Mr. Santopietro devotes special attention to *High Society*. He takes the sin of omission to dizzying heights with this statement.

"It's a movie with three indisputable assets: Louis Armstrong, the terrific score by Cole Porter and Frank Sinatra. When those three assets are allowed to drive the action, High Society soars to the top level of musicals."

Isn't Crosby, the center of gravity in this film who sings the lion's share of that Porter score, an indisputable asset? He writes Crosby may not be making much of an attempt to play anything but the public's idea of Bing Crosby. With this Mr. Santopietro devalues the entire essence of star quality and the seemingly simple task of mythmaking.

The author heaps praise on Crosby, but it seems grudging. "Put him within shouting distance of a song and he hits a home run every time at bat." Well enough, but while again discussing "True Love" (which he incorrectly names as an Oscar winner; elsewhere he places *The Big Broadcast* as a 1929 release), Mr. Santopietro returns to his misguided criticism and his horizon fixation. In a manner of speaking the differences between Sinatra and Crosby can be appreciated in this sequence.

"Crosby possesses an instrument of extraordinary beauty, a gorgeous baritone voice that effortlessly runs up and down the scales, but while Sinatra prefers to generate passion by singing directly to the object of his serenade, Crosby seems more at home gazing out to the horizon or singing to the camera. Physical proximity was not Crosby's strong point on film, and, oddly enough, he and Kelly generated more heat as the unhappy husband and wife in The Country Girl than as this divorced, soon to be re-wed couple."

Again his comparison is absurd. The honeymoon reverie in *High Society* should not contain signs of conflict, while the tempestuous marriage in *The Country Girl* insists upon it. Furthermore most every Crosby film is a cherchez la femme exercise with many moments of romantic rapture, not to mention proximity.

Mr. Santopietro does rhapsodize over "Now You Has Jazz", calling it a great musical moment. He embellishes the point.

"Always known for his relaxed, casual style (he was known on the set as Nembutal as opposed to the more manic Sinatra moniker of Dexedrine), Crosby on film often gave one the sense that he was acting the role of a supremely mellow fellow. Yes, he was relaxed, but he was also an actor, with a tightly coiled spring inside...Here the sheer joy of singing and performing with his friend Satchmo unleashes his most expressive body language in the film – arms outstretched, fingers snapping, and entire body bouncing, he is a man at the top of his game."

For once he gets it right, as he does when he extols the Crosby and Sinatra duet.

"The boys – and they are decidedly boys here – lift the song into the pantheon of great musical moments through the sheer force of their personalities...Frank and Bing are at their peaks, making it appear that they're improvising the entire routine...this is not just the high point of the film; it's one of the great moments in the entire Sinatra film catalog. The sheer sense of fun these two pros have together, a palpable joy that, far from being an in – joke, spreads infectiously to the audience, is a delirious display of talent that leaves us grinning from ear to ear...When they finish off the song... the apex of the film has been reached."

A man at the top of his game

This is surprising praise, since Crosby didn't even merit inclusion as one of the film's assets. Of course the author must temper his praise by suggesting that in the dialogue sequences Crosby is merely coasting so the audience is more interested in Sinatra and must even secretly wish that Kelly should chose him over Crosby. He even intimates that the only reason that Kelly marries Crosby is because Armstrong plays the wedding march. Thus Mr. Santopietro would deny the ending which apotheosizes Crosby as the one of the most perennial romantic icons of the musical film.

Beyond enjoying the "Teamwork" number Mr. Santopietro has a rather negative view of *The Road to Hong Kong* in which Sinatra appeared in a cameo role at the film's conclusion. Even in discussing this film, in which Sinatra's contribution is minimal, he can't refrain from knocking Crosby.

"Crosby could be a first class actor...and was an enormous movie star with a far reaching talent that matched his wide box office appeal. He could carry a film himself, or easily with a variety of performers." Next the inevitable preposition.

But just as in High Society, he is so intent on appearing relaxed and nonchalant that he shortchanges himself, Hope and the audience. He has carried the nonchalance beautifully displayed in the previous "Road" pictures to the breaking point. It's as if Crosby never wanted the effort to show, and perhaps out of fear that he would be mocked if he exerted himself and the results were not first class, he protected himself by displaying a detached sense that all but says, See, I'm not taking any of this seriously – you can't blame me or criticize me. It's a formula that ...reveals a decided contrast between Sinatra and his onetime idol Crosby."

Not content with making the misguided criticism once, he must repeat it. Mr. Santopietro's fixation on Crosby's putative nonchalance borders on the pathologic. By definition the word means without warmth or enthusiasm, and in my opinion Crosby exuded these qualities. Vast audiences, from whom it is absurd to suggest that Crosby had anything to fear, agreed for decades. If they felt shortchanged it's odd that they kept on handing over their money at the box office. To indicate that Hope felt slighted is bizarre. Hope and Crosby understood, as the great movie stars did, that less is more when appearing before the camera. Hollywood musicals weren't triathlons; nor should the appearance of exertion be a vaunted goal. It was Crosby's consummate magic that enabled him to sublimate intensive – and strenuous - rehearsal into a performance that appeared effortless and spontaneous and insouciant, never nonchalant. The author doesn't grasp this alchemy which is the substance of stardom; one which forged a friendship between Crosby and his fans, a bond perhaps precluded by Sinatra's more exotic appeal.

The author has kind things to say about Crosby in *Robin and the Seven Hoods.*

""Style" is great movie musical moment, one worth watching repeatedly. Crosby is in top form, sounding terrific and charming the audience with his eccentric but effective dancing style. The joy Frank Sinatra Jr. says Crosby felt at once again making a full scale musical registers on film. Perhaps the friendly rivalry between Bing and Frank caused each man to try harder; it's remarkably cheering to see them both dig a bit deeper."

Crosby isn't trying or digging at all. If so how could he be in possession of Style? Mr. Santopietro offers this final preposterous diatribe.

"Sinatra never keeps the audience at a distance as Crosby did, and Sinatra's films, as well as his legacy as a movie star, looms much larger with the passing years than do Crosby's. Sinatra was a hot performer and Crosby a very cool customer. It's why Sinatra as a rule registered better on film and Crosby better on television. Crosby's remove (there you go again) *like that of Perry Como, worked well on the small screen, whereas Sinatra, in his weekly 1950's series, seemed ready to jump through the screen...In the end Crosby's cool, so reassuring in his early film roles, came to inhibit his full development as a film actor, legendary though that film career was."*

He lifts this construct from Jeanine Basinger's comparison of Crosby and Como in her book, *The Star Machine*. There she makes the claim in reverse for Crosby.

How can Mr. Santopietro suggest that Crosby didn't register like a starburst on the silver screen? His awesome cinematic legacy shows no signs of diminution. The constant attempt to crown Sinatra while dethroning Crosby exposes an insecurity that must always discern an eclipse. The feud was and remains a publicist's scheme. The two icons must share a celestial laugh at such displays of undemocratic behavior and ask with bemusement, Well, Did You Evah?

Martin McQuade

2. Pieces Of My Heart by Robert J. Wagner and Scott Eyman. Published by Harper Collins, September 2008, 336 pages, hardcover. ISBN-13: 9780061373312. List price $25.95

Robert Wagner has just written, with assist from Scott Eyman, an autobiography entitled *Pieces of My Heart*, published by Harper Collins. The reminiscences encompass *Say One for Me.* Mr. Wagner recalls differences with the film's auteur, Frank Tashlin.

"For one thing he didn't want Natalie (Wood) visiting the set, which I thought was rude and unprofessional. Much more important than that was Tashlin's attempted intercession for a friend of his who had written some songs that Tashlin wanted featured in the film. "Jesus Christ," I told him, "I'd rather have Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen write my material than your friend." He didn't appreciate my response, so things were a bit chilly between Mr. Tashlin and myself, not that I cared."

Mr. Wagner also didn't bond with Debbie Reynolds, due to her preoccupation with her sensational marital woes at the time He isn't exactly ecstatic about his performance in the film.

"I did a little singing and dancing. I wasn't Astaire; but I wasn't terrible. It was basically a riff on Pal Joey, but a riff that was too little, too late."

One factor seems to have completely redeemed what

seems to have been a forlorn experience.

"Bing played a priest. Again. There was a period when it was unfashionable to say nice things about Bing Crosby as a human being, but I had a great deal of affection for him...Bing and I spent a lot of time talking about golf, and he gave me some pipes he had brought back from England. He also gave me a beautiful Labrador I named Conroy, after Bing's character in the film."

Mr. Wagner enlivens his graciousness with a recollection that Crosby's canine bequest had a tendency to leap from the diving board into Mr. Wagner's pool and swim underwater, a rare talent presumably unbeknownst to its giver.

Martin McQuade

3. Nice Work If You Can Get It – My Life in Rhythm and Rhyme

By Michael Feinstein, published by Hyperion, hardcover, 406 pages; ISBN: 0-7868-6093-6

This was published in 1995 but your Editor has only just come across it. For anyone interested in the Great American Songbook like me, this is a fascinating work. Michael writes in a forthright manner about his career including the six years he spent working for Ira Gershwin and through this association the many other showbiz greats he encountered. His love of popular songs shouts out from the pages and he quotes from many great lyrics.

Naturally he expresses some thoughts about Bing and I thought you might like to read them. Talking about singers who divert from the written lyrics of songs, he says:

"Crosby took a lot of liberties, too, but there was something essentially organic and musical about what Crosby did. I find his interpolations charming, even though he made his share of inappropriate changes....I spent several hours recently listening to Sinatra recordings back to back with Crosby recordings. Bing is the master for me, for sheer delight in tone and warmth of interpretation."

One of Michael's early influences was Al Jolson and after a section about Al, he turns to Bing.

"...Beyond his (Jolson's) vocal power, his onstage movements were also very sexual; he swiveled his hips in a way that presaged Elvis Presley by a good forty years, something that is documented on the few films he made, as weak as most of them were. Electric, charismatic, ego-driven, Jolson was the epitome of the high-powered performer.

At the other end of the spectrum was Bing Crosby, cool, laid-back, the ultimate crooner. Bing remains an enigmatic character to most people... His voice was like an instrument in the orchestra, the way he could bounce on top of a note. His rhythm was impeccable. In fact, I believe he was the greatest rhythm singer of the century. Just listen to the phrasing on any of the hundreds of records he made with jazz backing; the natural way he felt the tune was unparalleled. Crosby fooled with the melody more than many other singers, and yet it rarely bothers me, because it never seems forced or merely for the purpose of bravado as it does with Sinatra. The records with all the pickup bands and studio bands of the early '30s can sometimes be over the top, but they are also among my favorite recordings because they are unfettered by the affectations that came upon him later.

The thing that most intrigues me about Crosby is his change of style through the decades, his ability to survive and to sing every kind of song by adapting it to suit his voice. He recorded everything from hillbilly songs to Victor Herbert operetta, from opera to children's songs, Hawaiian and Irish songs, and songs for every holiday known to humanity. The trashiest pop songs he sang were often hits on the radio. He made it a point to look and sound like everything was off the cuff, yet he worked extremely hard. Jimmy Cagney discovered that one time when they were working together. Bing seemed to be hardly exerting himself at all, until Cagney put his arm around him and realized that Crosby was drenched in sweat.

Michael Feinstein performing with noted songwriter Alan Bergman in May last year.

Crosby's early recordings, the ones from the '20s with Paul Whiteman, are different from the ones he was making in the early '30s, just as those are different from his recordings at the end of the '30s. He kept changing with the times and I don't even think it was a conscious decision. He just took each song as it came. He was largely regarded as the first singer to use the microphone in a way that was intimate, becoming the first real crooner and, in that respect, an important figure in the evolution of male popular singing.

For me as I was growing up, Jolson and Crosby divided the world between them. I don't recall being aware of any other voices in the same way that I was of those two."

I really enjoyed this book and you can still pick it up through Amazon for a very reasonable price.

Malcolm Macfarlane

4. You Call it Madness: The sensuous song of the croon - by Lenny Kaye. Published by Villard Books in 2004. 500pp. $25.95. ISBN 0-679-46308-9

Keith Parkinson reports on another book with Bing links.

I did not seek out this book. I had never read a review and came upon it by chance. I suppose it insinuated itself onto my bookshelf. The book's dust jacket promised "a pitch-perfect evocation of one of the most romantic, creatively exuberant periods of our past - an era whose influence still burns brightly in the music and popular culture of today." But would it appeal to a Bing fan? I turned to the book's index. There were a couple of hundred references to *Crosby, Bing*. This was surely a book I could not possibly pass by. I turned to appendix which listed a selected discography. There were twenty Crosby album recommendations which covered all of Bing's significant recordings. This was a must have publication.

The defining of crooning came early in the book with examples being cited to indicate that crooning cropped up quite early in the history of recorded music. Kaye quotes examples such as "My Croony Melody" by Billy Murray recorded in 1914 and "Croon Time" by Edna Brown and James Reed some two years later.

And then the book lost its way. I was reading a biography of Russ Columbo. It was only when I came to the acknowledgements at the back of the book that I read the author's confession: "I postponed reading the two biographies of Columbo that came out during the concluding stages of my writing." My guess is that Kaye was commissioned to write a Columbo biography. By the time he had submitted it to Villard Books he had been pipped at the post. Twice. How do you market a biography about an almost forgotten vocalist who died in 1934 and who had been the subject of two recently published volumes? You disguise its subject matter by introducing an assembly of other characters of the time and attempt to turn it into a general history of crooning. The only fair way to review this book is to ignore the fact that it started life as a biography of Russ Columbo and approach it from the standpoint of a potential purchaser being a member of the International Club Crosby.

For starters, how accurate is it on the subject of Bing Crosby? It is more or less spot on. That is explained by the book's extensive bibliography. Just about every book written about Bing has been utilised. All the major works are there. "Call Me Lucky", "My Life With Bing", "Going My Own Way", "The Films of Bing Crosby", "Bing Crosby: A Discography, Radio Program List and Filmography" and some half dozen others. This magazine editor's first attempt at a Crosby chronology, "Bing: A Diary of a Lifetime" is in there as well. In fact, Lenny Kaye has used most of the reliable reference books about Bing to compile his own Crosby story. He also tells us, "I have spent many hours within the subcultural corridors of *"Bingang"* (the official publication of the Club Crosby). Most significantly, Kaye has read "Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams 1903-1940" by Gary Giddins. I strongly suspect that Giddins' Crosby biography was the basis of Lenny Kaye's text on Bing. The time span of the book is heavily weighted in favour of the brief showbusiness career of Russ Columbo which ended in 1934. This leads to a retelling of Bing's life during his early showbusiness career with due emphasis being placed on how the public appreciation of Crosby and Columbo interacted. In fairness to Kaye, when Bing's career is traced through to his death the detail is missing but the facts are accurate.

The Columbo funeral – Bing is on the far left at the front

What else is good about the book from the standpoint of a Crosbyphile? There's a photograph which I don't recall having seen before which depicts Bing as a pallbearer at the funeral service of Russ Columbo. There is one original interview about Bing not culled from a previously published work. This took

place with Les Paul who tells an intriguing story. Paul states that when Bing turned up for a recording session he arrived equipped with enough tipple for three drinks. "He'd ask...if he (Paul) wanted a nip. Les knew not to say yeah, because Crosby had them measured out, not a drop more."

A couple of things I don't like about the book are personal. When I read a biography I want to know the source of statements and facts. And I don't like to read dialogue inserted into the text which is purely speculative. For instance, we are told Bing attended a dinner held by CBS radio. "How's your pal Russ Columbo?" a journalist allegedly asked Bing. "Pal? Say, listen, the first time I meet that guy Columbo, and it won't be too soon either, I'm just going to give him something to remember me by...and it won't be grapefruit." We all know enough about Bing to very much doubt that exchange.

The most jarring of all of Kaye's text comes in a chapter devoted to the last thoughts of the dying Russ Columbo when he accidentally shot himself. Kaye's writing style is also unnerving. His disjointed narrative does not produce a seamless narrative. At time it is simple confusing. For example, he writes, "A discus of film. You can fit it in your hand. Sail it into the past, a long arc of sixteen millimeters. Boomerang it into the future."

Yet when he wants to engage the reader's attention he can accomplish this effortlessly. He can give his words a poetic twist without obscuring his message. I will end this review on a high. This passage about a Crosby recording session illustrates how the book's five hundred pages could have read if only Lenny Kaye had abandoned his flights of fancy and stuck to readable prose:

> *"He kept the melody in perfect flight, an aviator moving through slipstreams of wind, like a golf ball slicing the air currents, and pretty soon he would find that his affable way with his public allowed him more time with his not-so-secret passion, the wood and the nine iron."*

Keith Parkinson

5. PARKY – My autobiography by Michael Parkinson. Published by Hodder & Stoughton in October 2008. Hardcover, 412 pages. List price £20 but available from Amazon for £11.46. ISBN-13: 978-0340961667

This book sold very well in the UK in the run-up to Christmas. Most members will know that Parkinson was a most popular UK chat show host who interviewed Bing on two occasions. His story is entertaining and this is a most readable book, especially if you like cricket and Muhammad Ali!

There is a nice section about Bing which we now share with you.

"One day we received a letter from a man called Leslie Gaynor. *(Editor: It should of course be Gaylor)* He was a fitter for Hovercraft in the Isle of Wight. He said he had the biggest collection in the land of Bing Crosby memorabilia, that Bing was a personal friend of his and if we wanted him on the show he could fix it. We thought he was a nutter. But then why would he say these things if there was not an element of truth in them? So we asked him to come to London and not only did Mr Gaynor get us Bing Crosby, he was also indirectly responsible for Fred Astaire appearing on the show.

Les Gaylor with Bing in London.

It is a mark of Crosby's unaffected good nature that he made his first appearance on *Parkinson* not because Orson Welles had been on the show or he had anything to promote, but out of friendship for Leslie Gaynor. He was the most relaxed and laid back of them all. He arrived alone at the BBC TV Centre in a black cab. We had sent a limo, which he had dismissed.

When he appeared a second time on the show he also dismissed the limo. I asked him why he preferred London cabs to limousines. He said he had been coming to London for more than forty years and had always used London cabs. I persisted. But why?

'Well, I must confess that in all the years I have been

coming to London and using cabs I have never been charged a fare. The cabbie always says, "Bing, because of all the joy you have given me and the family over the years, the ride is on me.'"

'That is a true definition of a superstar,' I said.

Then I thought for a moment and said, 'But come on. There must have been an occasion when the cabbie didn't recognise you?'

'True,' he said.

'What did you do then?' I asked.

'When I thought they were not sure, I would move that little glass partition, sing two or three bars of "White Christmas" and they knew who they had in the back of their cab; he said.

When he arrived at the reception desk at the TV Centre he was carrying a hat box under his arm. He said to the receptionist. 'Hi, I'm Bing Crosby. Can you direct me towards the gal who's going to fix my toop.'

His hairpiece was in the box.

He told me his favourite song was 'White Christmas' and he never tired of singing it. When he performed it on the show I was astonished to see him reading the words from autocue. He had an effortless style and possessed the greatest gift of all, that of making everyone in the studio believe they wanted to work for him.

That said he wasn't a pushover. He had very exacting standards and expected everyone else to match them. It is true that, like Sinatra, he didn't care much for rehearsal, which is not the same as saying he didn't care about getting it right. Again like Sinatra, when he came into the studio to rehearse he was word perfect and faultless in his delivery. He expected everyone else to be the same. He ran through his number twice, the band was happy, it sounded good. Then the director asked if he would mind doing it one more time. Crosby agreed. When he had finished, the director pleaded with Bing for another take.

Crosby asked why.

The director said, 'I think I can do it better.'

Bing smiled and said, 'I can't.'

I did a duet with Crosby, which is a bit like saying I danced with Ginger Rogers or opened the innings with W. G. Grace.

Bing said if I was any good he was going to retire and play golf. At the end of our performance, he looked at me and said, 'Guess I'm back on the road again.'"

Frank Sinatra/Bing Crosby rivalry backdrop to novel

Jeffrey Simpson of the Chronicle Herald of Nova Scotia, Canada reviewed a new book in the issue of February 1.

Forget about rival gangsta rappers — conflicts between musicians were prevalent even back in the 1940s.

Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby had an antagonistic relationship that — even if not entirely serious — spilled over into the lives of their fans.

How this friction played out at a Vancouver high school in 1948 is the focus of Paul Headrick's new novel, *That Tune Clutches My Heart* (Gaspereau Press, 152 pages, $24.95).

"They jokingly played up the idea of a conflict in radio programs broadcast during World War II," the Vancouver-based author said of the two singers during a recent email interview.

"But I imagined a precociously intellectual girl who takes the whole matter very seriously. She sees that something important is conveyed in a singer's interpretation of a popular song, and that listeners can be affected and influenced, whether they are aware or not."

Headrick tells the story through a diary that May Sutherland begins on her first day of high school. Her fellow students are split over their musical preferences between Sinatra and Crosby. May finds herself as one of the only people to be neutral, but the conflict still costs her two friends.

"Her motivation to figure the problem out is strong because the conflict shakes her world and, at least in her mind, becomes connected to serious issues between her professor parents," Headrick said.

It was an era that marked the advent of mass pop culture brought directly to young people — through radio. The same medium helped make Sinatra and Crosby into superstars.

"There's a lot of similarity between the life of a high school student today and one in 1948," Headrick said. "It's characterized by intense personal confusion, fear about the fate of the world and excitement about the new experiences inevitably to come."

Headrick believes that kids grew up more quickly in the first half of the 20th century than they do today.

"Youth culture is more influential now than it was then, a leftover from the dominance of the boomers in the 60s, perhaps," he said. "This cultural strength might have something to do with our contemporary sense of a prolonged youth.

"If the strongest sense of culture is adult, perhaps those on the verge of adulthood would want to grow up quickly and become participants in the things that seem to matter. If, on the other hand, what seems exciting and vital is connected to youth, then that's a reason for the young collectively to drag their heels. "

As for the personal preference of the author, who comes from a family of musicians, he chooses 'Ol Blue Eyes. He says Sinatra is a more exciting singer.

Jeffrey Simpson

(Editor: There's no accounting for taste!)

Bing's Last White Christmas

The UK Reader's Digest for December 2008 contained a lovely article by Jo Ross.

In the summer of 1977 I was in my early twenties and about to go up to Edinburgh to perform in a play on the fringe. But three days before rehearsals were due to start, the director phoned to say that the play was off. To ease my disappointment, he asked me if I'd like to work for Bing Crosby for a couple of weeks. The famous crooner was coming over to London to record a "Christmas Special" at Elstree Studios.

I gave a non-committal answer and then forgot about it. All I wanted was a good mope.

Two hours later the phone rang and an American voice asked to speak to Jo Ross.

"Speaking"

"This is Bing Crosby."

"Oh, stop it, just stop it—it's not even funny. Anyway, he's been dead for years."

Twenty toe-curlingly embarrassing minutes later I found myself employed as Mr Crosby's gofer. My duties seemed to be remarkably light—take Mr Crosby to the set each morning, run errands for him, make sure his car was in the correct place at the end of the day.

I reported for duty in a dark green Mini Moke that I had borrowed from my boyfriend. It had long since lost its canvas sides and the petrol gauge didn't work. It was a disgrace.

Elstree was huge. When I got there the sound stage was being turned into the interior of a "typical" English country manor house, with a drawing room the size of Westminster Abbey. In the rehearsal room, leaning on an upright piano, was a small, upright man with a pale blue trilby hat on the back of his head.

"Hi there," said Bing Crosby. "How you doin? Gonna show me round? Can you show me where to get coffee?"

"Certainly," I replied. I hadn't a clue where to get a coffee. Bing was very relaxed and chatty, and pretended not to notice that I was lost. Eventually we reached a junction in the corridor.

With a wry smile, Bing suggested that we turn left. "What d'you think? Shall we risk it?"

Pretty soon I was having a ball. Bing was undemanding—and rather shy. I thought he was adorable and was thrilled when one day he asked for a lift back to his hotel. Twenty minutes later we were chugging along in the Mini Moke, when suddenly the engine cut out. I hopped out and started looking pointlessly under the bonnet.

A voice from the front seat asked, "Could you have run out of gas?"

Of course. Bing and I stood by the side of the road waiting for someone to give us a lift to the nearest petrol station.

Eventually, a little car heaving with children stopped. The driver, a middle-aged man, approached us, eyes bulging.

"You... you... you..."

"Yep" said Bing. "We're out of gas. Can you give me a ride to a garage?"

"Me?... You?... Me... me... and you? Kids, out, get out... *Get out of the car!*"

Two minutes later I was standing by the road with four bewildered children, watching Bing Crosby disappear in a Ford Fiesta.

When the car returned with petrol, the fan insisted on pouring it into the tank. Then, still unable to speak, he bundled the now-furious children into the Fiesta and, with a final "You,.. you...", drove off.

Bing at work on his last TV show

Bing ended his Christmas Special, not surprisingly, with "White Christmas". The studio was packed for the recording. Bing asked to see me in the make-up room, "Hey, Lefty," he said, using the nickname he'd given me when he discovered I was a southpaw. "Write me out an idiot board, would you?"

"Yes of course. What for?"

"White Christmas'."

There was stunned silence in the make-up room. Could it be that Bing Crosby did not know the words? He explained that he needed a cue card because he had trouble remembering the verse at the very beginning.

Somehow I found some large white cards and a marker pen. I scrawled out the first verse and took up my prearranged position under the piano.

As the band struck up, Bing looked down and began to sing these lines:

The sun is shining

The grass is green
The orange and plum trees sway
There's never been such a day
In Beverly Hills LA

He was about to continue with "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" when he faltered, took another look at the card and...stopped singing. The music cut out. Bing got down on his hands and knees and crawled under the piano. He took my hand and very quietly said, "There isn't a plum tree in LA."

Fearing one of us had lost the plot, I gripped his hand and said, "That's a pity."

A little less gently now, he stabbed at where I'd written the word "plum". "It's palm trees, palm trees, palm trees."

It was awful. From my position under the piano 1 thought of what a useless gofer I'd been and how often I'd let Bing down, even forgetting to bring the clubs when he was playing golf. Yet he had always responded with humour and grace. Now he'd fluffed his lines—all because of me.

The rest of the day was a blur of sets being pulled down and costumes being packed up. People were saying their goodbyes, making plans for farewell drinks.

I wanted to say goodbye to Bing and to apologise, but I couldn't find him. Feeling oddly empty and depressed, I wandered outside, thinking that I'd never see him again. Then I heard a familiar voice.

"Hey, Lefty! Can you give me a ride?"

There was Bing in the front seat of the Moke, one foot perched on the dashboard.

"Absolutely" I said. "London?"

"Why not—shall we risk it?"

Five weeks later, Bing Crosby died of a heart attack while playing golf in Spain. He was 74 years old.

Jo Ross

Celluloid Crosby

Seventy years ago this year a legendary screen comedy series was born. 1939 saw *Road to Singapore* go before the cameras. It established a cinematic partnership between Bing, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour which lasted until *The Road to Hong Kong* ended the teaming in 1962. Bing and Bob were entertainment pals before the series. Dotty established a relationship with the boys following her casting in the first *Road* film. Her friendship with her male co-stars was not as well cemented.

The development of the series has been well documented. This is how the scenario unfolded:

- Harry Hervey wrote a dramatic story about missionaries on a tropical island. Paramount owned the property
- Contract writers Frank Butler and Don Hartman were assigned to turn Hervey's opus into a comedy. They complied and came up with a working title "Road to Mandalay". Hervey received no on screen credit for his "contribution"
- Paramount contractees Fred MacMurray and Jack Oakie were considered for the leading roles of Josh Mallon and Ace Lannigan. Neither actor was available
- Bing was cast as Mallon and Dorothy Lamour signed for the part of leading lady Mima
- George Burns and Gracie Allen were approached to appear in the film. They declined
- Bob Hope was assigned the part of Ace Lannigan

This 1939 chronology raises a couple of issues. Why, when Paramount employed MacMurray and Oakie, would they offer them parts in a film for which they were unavailable? Surely the studio knew of their existing film commitments. As for the involvement of Burns and Allen, were parts for the duo to be written into the film? The remaining role to be cast was that of a sparring partner for Bing. It doesn't really matter. Burns and Allen said no to whatever was on offer from Paramount. Who can blame them? Five years earlier they had been in another Crosby picture: *We're Not Dressing*. They were cast as naturalists George and Gracie Martin. They played little part in advancing the film's plot. Their roles could have been written out of the story without the audience noticing any lapse in continuity. Only the film's 77 minute running time signalled a need for their footage.

Once casting was sorted *Road to Singapore* went into production on Monday, October 2nd, 1939. It was to become Paramount's top grossing picture of 1940. The film's score with lyrics by Johnny Burke provided the template for future *Road* films. A comedy duet between Bing and Bob is performed in the film's first reel ("Captain Custard"). A romantic ballad is pitched by Bing to Dottie ("Too Romantic"). Dorothy Lamour's passable vocal talents are allowed a three minute vocal solo ("The Moon and the Willow Tree"). And there is always an up-tempo feel good song for Crosby to deliver before the last reel ("Sweet Potato Piper"). For *Singapore* Burke's melodies were provided by both the film's director Victor Schertzinger and James V. Monaco. Subsequent *Roads* usually relied on James Van Heusen to provide the music.

Singapore also originated the boy's pat-a-cake routine. It was fresh at the time. It was used twice in that first film. It must have been a scriptwriter's dream. Paint Bing and Bob into a corner. With odds stacked against the duo, the writers don't have to contrive a means of escape. Just bring out the pat-a-cake gag. Like

a catch phrase it popped up in subsequent *Road* films on the pretext that cinemagoers expected it. By the time of *The Road to Hong Kong* (1962) it had started to look a little jaded to increasingly sophisticated audiences.

Bing, Bob and Dottie attend a feast in *Road To Singapore.*

The release of film must have taken critics by surprise. They had not seen anything quite like it before. Paramount arranged a preview towards the end of February, 1940. James Francis Crow reviewed it for a Los Angeles based newspaper and wrote: "It is an erratic picture in its early reels, and there were many moments during last night's preview when it looked as if *Road to Singapore* was going to be a failure." Then Crow got to grips with what was then the film's "off the wall" humour. As the film progressed he was drawn into the spirit of what was unfolding on screen. He went on to say, "It redeems itself quickly, however, and although it remains weak in romantic appeal, it succeeds admirably in the blending of song and dance and comedy." The following month it received its first public screenings. On March 15th established showbusiness critic Harrison Carroll reported: "As a pair of rolling stones in *Road to Singapore*, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope contribute some of the most spontaneous clowning of the year and turn what might have been just another South Sea musical into a very funny picture."

Carroll's review of *Road to Singapore* also covered the stage show that was being presented at Los Angeles' Paramount cinema. Paramount owned its own similarly named theatre chain. East and West Coast premieres took place at Paramount theatres. It was not until the late 1940s that a law was passed in the States making the Hollywood studios divest themselves of their cinema chains. The joint attractions of stage and screen entertainment were commonplace in the 1940s in major city venues. The main stage presentation that week at the LA Paramount was Alvino Rey plus The Four King Sisters. However, lower down the billing, was Singapore Sal. This was actually Carmen D'Antonio. Her name appears way down the cast list of *Road to Singapore* where she is credited as native dancer. So it was appropriate that her performance on stage that week was the dance she did in that film. The sequence in question occurs when Bing is dancing with Carmen D'Antonio unaware that he is taking part in a native wedding ceremony.

The stage show that accompanied *Singapore* when it received its New York premiere at the Paramount Theatre on 13th April, 1940 gave only a hint of the toughest vocal competition Bing would have to face since his rise to popularity. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra featuring Frank Sinatra was the added crowd puller. *Singapore* hardly needed the boost of an added live attraction. The same can't be said when Sinatra next appeared on stage at the Paramount in support of a film featuring Bing. That happened two years later with the "all star" *Star Spangled Rhythm.* It wasn't one of Paramount's strongest releases and the availability of two of American's favourite singers in one massive auditorium was a good business ploy. The Sinatra name on the marquee probably sold more tickets than the feature film.

By April of 1940 *Road to Singapore* was a proven box-office success. Word of mouth had done a lot to ensure it a place in Variety's list of the top ten box-office movies of 1939/1940. A sequel was inevitable. In her Los Angeles Examiner column of 23rd April showbusiness gossip columnist Louella Parsons reported:

> "...Bob, Bing and Dottie also will team up for *The Road to Rio*, the latter an original by Sy Bartlett and Don Hartmann. Perhaps the studio can't be blamed for trying to follow up a money-making success, but too many stories along the same lines will get tiresome, even with La Lamour's sarongs, Bing's singing and Bob's clowning."

Louella got it wrong on two counts. The Paramount *Road* pictures did not get tiresome. And *Zanzibar, Morocco* and *Utopia* followed *Singapore* before *Rio* went into production. But as Bartlett and Hartmann were credited with the story for *Zanzibar* it looks as

though the studio were happy to stick a pin on the map to find any country to accommodate the shenanigans of Crosby, Hope and Lamour.

It would be a year before *Road to Singapore* received theatrical distribution in the U.K. The Odeon circuit achieved record business when it went on general release in the spring of 1941. Perhaps the manager of the Odeon, Exeter, felt that there was no need to promote a foregone success. The support for *Singapore* during the week commencing Monday, May 27th, was *Hitler the Beast of Berlin.* Special flyers were printed with the *Road* picture taking up 10% of the advertisement. The rest of the handout showed a caricature of Hitler and a swastika. The public were encouraged to disfigure them with a lighted cigarette.

And the pull of a *Road* film did not diminish with time. The Astoria Cinema in Finsbury Park, London was regarded as one of Britain's most atmospheric cinemas due to its elaborate internal decor. Opened in September, 1930, it celebrated its 25th anniversary with a week of classic films, culminating in a showing of *Road to Singapore* on October 1st, 1955. By then the Paramount series had run its course and whoever booked films for the Astoria quite rightly went back to where it all began.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

TOPS IS THE LIMIT was the title given to the 1936 version of *Anything Goes* to avoid it being confused with the 1956 remake when the former received screenings on television.

TOVER, LEO (1902-1964) Director of photography. He was the man behind the camera for four Crosby films. They were *College Humor* (1933), *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935), *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) and *Say One For Me* (1959). His career spanned silents (*Fascinating Youth* in 1926) to widescreen and colour. His final film was *A Very Special Favour* released the year following his death. Tover's whole life was spent working in films, mainly at Paramount or 20th Century-Fox. He began as a clapperboy when he was sixteen and remained in constant demand thereafter being nominated twice unsuccessfully for an Oscar for *Hold Back The Dawn* (1941) and *The Heiress* (1949).

TRAVERS, HENRY (1874-1965) Actor. Third billed in *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945), Travers played Horace Bogardus, the villain of the piece. If he got his hands on St. Mary's he would demolish it. Travers reached Hollywood via the British stage and then Broadway. Studios knew casting him would add dignity to their productions. He was nominated for an Oscar as best supporting actor for his performance in *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) losing out to Van Heflin in *Johnny Eager.* After his Crosby picture he made the film which guaranteed he would be seen year after year. That was *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) in which he played 'Clarence' and which seemingly will continue to have a wonderful life ever after on the big screen, the small screen and DVD.

TREACHER, ARTHUR (1894-1975) English-born actor who specialised in portraying butlers. In *Anything Goes* (1936) Arthur Treacher fell for Ethel Merman. Playing the part of Sir Evelyn Oakleigh, Treacher was, for once, taking on a part of master rather than servant. He played Jeeves in two mid-thirties films and lent his meticulously mannered characterisations to films for the next thirty years. He quit movies after *Mary Poppins* (1964). He then lent his name to a fast food fish and chip chain in the USA. I was once in Detroit when hunger got the better of me whilst I was browsing in an out-of-town shopping mall. All the usual outlets like McDonalds, Subway and so on were to hand but I decided that I'd go for a touch of class. If Arthur Treacher put his name to fish and chips then a treat was bound to be in store. I was wrong.

TREMAYNE, LES (1913-2003) Actor. In a part that might have been lifted from a melodrama staged by an early touring company, Les Tremayne played Harry LaMaise in *Say One For Me* (1959). In that film he was the father of Holly (Debbie Reynolds). He made sacrifices to put his daughter through college. She let him believe that she was a secretary when she was, in fact, a night club singer and dancer. And of course father was in declining health when he was subjected to deceit. English born Tremayne never really made it in films. For every recognisable title in his filmography, such as *The Fortune Cookie* (1966), you encounter such obscure releases as *Strawberries Need Rain* (1970) and *Snakes* (1974).

TROTTER, JOHN SCOTT (1908-1975) Bandleader. John Scott Trotter was in his late twenties when he began an association with Bing that lasted throughout Bing's peak years as a recording artiste and actor. JST had proved his skills as a pianist and arranger when he worked for Hal Kemp. When he decided to go it alone he formed an association with American Decca and provided definitive arrangements to hundreds of Bing's studio and radio recordings. He had links with five Crosby pictures during the early years of his association with Bing. They were:

- *Pennies from Heaven* (1936) - musical arrangements for Bing's songs
- *Doctor Rhythm* (1938) - musical arrangements for Bing's songs
- *East Side of Heaven* (1939) - orchestrations jointly with Frank Skinner
- *Swing with Bing* (1940) - music by John Scott Trotter

and his Divot Diggers

• *Rhythm on the River* (1940) - orchestrations and playing himself in the film

John Scott Trotter's musical partnership with Bing benefitted both immeasurably.

TRUE LOVE Song. This was Bing's last million selling single, released in 1956 to tie in with the film *High Society* (1956). Grace Kelly, who joined Bing on vocals, was also the recipient of a gold disc. The song's romantic staging on board the yacht 'True Love' was ideal for presenting Cole Porter's last hit composition. Its reprise in the film is less romantic when rendered by an inebriated Grace Kelly.

Sonny Tufts with Bing on the *Duffy's Tavern* set.

TUFTS, SONNY [Bowen Charlton Tufts III] (1911-1970) It's obvious that Tufts had to change his forenames if only so that they would fit on a cinema marquee. His real name sounded as though he belonged to a prominent banking family. As indeed he did. He trained as an opera singer and appeared in two Broadway musicals at the end of the 1930s. In 1939 he made his film debut in *Ambush* and by 1944 he was sufficiently established as an actor to be third billed as Windy Smith in *Here Come the WAVES*. In the film Bing and Sonny are buddies who share an interest in the same girl - Betty Hutton. Both are satisfied with the film's outcome when the pair of them manage to win the favours of Miss Hutton because she played a dual role in the movie. Paramount used Tufts in their next film to feature Crosby, *Duffy's Tavern* (1944), when he had the opportunity to join Bing and several cast members in a parody of "Swinging on a Star". Tufts was never taken seriously as an actor. He received a number of parts in the 1940s playing easygoing leading men. He played the *Swell Guy* in the 1947 film of the same name but his off-screen reputation tagged him as a somewhat different person. He was sued by two showgirls for allegedly biting their thighs and he developed a drink problem. He tried to make a film comeback several times but his final photoplay confirms his lack of success. It was called *Cotton-pickin' Chickenpickers* (1967).

TUGEND, HARRY (1897-1989) Screenwriter. The stories or screenplays he wrote for films which involved Bing showed that Harry Tugend could vary his approach according to Paramount's need. He wrote the story of *Birth of the Blues* (1941) and then fashioned it into a screenplay with the assistance of Walter DeLeon. The following year he was responsible for the screenplay of *Star Spangled Rhythm* with four other writers penning the film's sketches. His last Crosby associated work was to provide the story of *Road to Bali* (1953) in collaboration with Frank Butler. He also produced that last Paramount *Road* picture. He had a parallel career during his Hollywood years. For radio he wrote and directed many of Fred Allen's shows. When television became a major entertainment force he switched his allegiance from the big to the small screen. His lightweight writing style was ideal for the variety and situation comedy shows which mushroomed during the 1950s. His last two films as screenwriter were *Pocketful of Miracles* (1961) and *Who's Minding the Store* (1963).

TUNBERG, KARL (1909-1992) Screenwriter. Like Harry Tugend, Karl Tunberg turned out lightweight screenplays and ventured into film production. Tunberg, who was born in Spokane, entered films in 1937. He co-wrote the screenplay of *Dixie* (1943) with Darrell Ware. He wrote the screenplay for two films released in 1959 which were untypical of his earlier, lighter work. They were *Libel*, a British film, and *Ben Hur*, a major biblical epic. He retired after his work on *How do I Love Thee* (1970).

Keith Parkinson

Road To Bali – the missing segment

Joe McGrenra posed a query to Ken Barnes on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum some months ago.

"I have a question. On the Laureate site talking about *Road to Bali*, you stated "...it was my original hope that we could do it as a comprehensive set of the Paramount Roads (ending with an expanded director's

cut of *Bali*). But it was pointed out to me that this would take too long to arrange and Universal wanted to get a box out in time for Christmas..." Does this mean that additional *Road to Bali* footage exists? If so approximately how much?"

Greg Van Beek responded quickly.

Not to speak for Ken, whom I'm sure will chime in when he sees your nice note, but I know of at least one out-take from *Road to Bali* that has survived, which I discussed with Ken at the time of the planned 'road' box set that you mentioned. There was a big production number of the title song that was originally included, but was cut after the initial preview because it was felt it slowed the pace of the picture. Bing and Bob Hope even went so far as to record the song for Decca for the soundtrack album. Production stills of the number were issued (I believe there's one reproduced in Robert Bookbinder's 1977 book *The Films of Bing Crosby*), picturing Bing and Bob in top hat, white tie and tails...all in disrepair. The tails are bent upward, the pants legs are gone up to the knees, etc. Dorothy Lamour was wearing sort of a "mini" sarong. It was all a bit bizarre, and seemingly out of place.

A production still from the missing segment

A brief snippet of this number was shown, albeit in black and white, on the October 24, 1975 NBC-tv special "Texaco Presents a Quarter Century of Bob Hope on Television". Bing appeared "live" on this special as well, trading barbs with Hope in between the vintage film and TV clips. At one point, Bing said that after 25 years on TV, "You've earned a rest." Bob replied "But I don't need a rest", to which Bing responded "Then think of the public!"

Ken Barnes came in a day or two later.

Greg is correct. This is going back about 7 years or so. I had the idea of doing a two-disc DVD Edition called "The Lost Roads" which would feature the DVD debut of *Road to Rio* (which, at that time had NEVER been issued on DVD) and a special expanded version of *Road to Bali* (which has since been declared Public Domain appearing on numerous labels - usually in bad condition).

With "Rio," I wanted to do an audio commentary tracing the details of that production - which I consider to be the best of the "Roads" - and how it differs from the rest of the series both in length and sophistication. For this, I approached Sony who currently hold the rights outside of the U.S.A. and they wanted $50,000 advance and 50 per cent of the royalties. This was totally prohibitive and I dropped the idea.

As for "Bali," I had been told - back in the 1970s - by Bing's business manager, Basil Grillo that the first cut of the film contained a lavish production number based on the film's title song. This particular sequence alone cost $250,000 (back in the 1950s you could make a whole film for that kind of money). But, after the film's initial preview the people at Paramount felt it was too long and slowed the picture down. I suspect also that they were concerned about the adventurous orchestrations by Van Cleave that were very much in the Stan Kenton style (You can still detect traces of the sophisticated scoring in the finished release that sound modern today). "Bali" is, in fact, orchestrally the best scored of all the "Road" pictures.

I was told that this missing sequence still exists in the library of Bob Hope Enterprises. I hope someday it will be released commercially. It certainly should be.

Ken Barnes

(Editor: Barbara Bauer's book "Bing Crosby" which looks at Bing's movies has a different production still from the missing scene on page 111. Ms Bauer talks about a scene which was cut from the film.

"One of the best 'studio executive' stories emerged from the making of *Bali*. Adolph Zukor, then president of Paramount, cut from the finished print an underwater ballet sequence that had cost a great deal because of its ingeniously utilized trick photography. Why? 'Because it was so boring'."

Was this the same scene described by Ken Barnes or was this something else which was cut from the film?)

Beloved Christmas classic gets a welcome upgrade

Bruce Kirkland had the following article in a number of Sun Media newspapers including the December 21 edition of the London Free Press of Ontario, Canada.

Along with Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, the

1951 *Scrooge/A Christmas Carol*, and the Canadian-American classic *A Christmas Story*, *Holiday Inn* is among the most beloved holiday movies of all time. This marvellous 1942 musical stars Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire as song-and-dance men falling for dishy dames played by Marjorie Reynolds and Virginia Dale. Built around all holidays but culminating in the bittersweet romance of Christmas and New Year's, the movie introduced Irving Berlin's song "White Christmas", one of the biggest hits in popular music history.

Now you can see (and hear) the movie as never before. *Holiday Inn* has been restored. It has also been—shock and awe—colourized. There is a new three-disc Collector's Set offering the movie in its original B&W on one disc and in the colour version on another. A third disc is a CD of the 12-title songbook sung by either Crosby or Astaire.

Colourization is still a controversial process—and it should be. Each case must be rigorously debated because colourization can damage a film's integrity. But *Holiday Inn,* directed by Mark Sandrich, may be a rare exception. Mary Crosby, Bing Crosby's actress daughter with second wife Kathryn Grant, certainly thinks so. In fact, she is enthusiastic about colourization.

"I can speak for the whole family," she tells Sun Media from her home in California. "We were thrilled and I really do think it was subtle and elegant and everything that my dad would have wanted the film to be."

The colourization was done at Legend Films in San Diego under the supervision of founder Barry Sandrew. The film itself first had to be meticulously restored.

"They didn't start with perfection," Crosby explains. "I think they really worked hard to get there and it was (a process) of really fixing up the movie before they could add colour."

Once that was done, more research was required. For example, in one of the film's lovely musical scenes—when Bing Crosby introduces Marjorie Reynolds to the patrons of his inn—she sweeps down the stairs in a beautiful frock. In B&W, we don't know what colour it was. In the colourized version, Sandrew decided it should be red. Then a researcher discovered a written record noting how every gold bead in Hollywood was gobbled up by Sandrich's costume department to make Reynolds' dress. Sandrew was obliged to change the colourized version into a shimmering gold. And it looks stunning, even though Sandrew personally still prefers the red.

"Don't you just love it!" Mary Crosby says of the anecdote. She also loved revisiting one of her father's best-loved movies for the first time in years.

"I was so pleased and amazed at how extraordinary the movie is and how it holds up over time and how insanely talented everybody was."

In her father's case, *Holiday Inn* reminded her of his comedic skills as well as his acting and singing chops. She was also reconnected to his legacy. In part because of *Holiday Inn* (and its 1954 spin-off, the popular Technicolor musical *White Christmas*), Crosby is forever linked to the Christmas holidays.

"After he died (in 1977) it was really sad and hard for me because he is so much a part of the holidays," Mary Crosby says. "It was kind of ouchy when I would go do groceries and hear him (in public).

"But now it's been so long and it just makes me so happy that he still represents the holiday season and does so for a new generation. And I think *Holiday Inn* is very much a part of that."

Bruce Kirkland

(Editor: See the Letters section for many other comments about the colorized 'Holiday Inn'.)

Holiday Inn and its soundtrack

Close Crosby followers may have noted a tiny trend in the past decade. Certain films—particularly his holiday films—are packaged with pertinent Bing recordings, in an evident effort to boost sales. More for your money, as it were.

Paramount probably started all this. It issued a colorful DVD of *White Christmas* in 2000, with a few added features on the disc. In 2006, the Turner Classic Movies television channel joined Starbucks coffee to package that disc with a "White Christmas" CD, supplied to Paramount by Universal Music. The package was sold through the Starbucks coffee shops. The CD was described on and in the package as "Limited Edition Original Soundtrack." and also as "Limited Edition White Christmas Soundtrack."

To some buyers, that may have suggested it had been taken direct from the film's soundtrack. Not so. These were the studio recordings made by Decca at the time of the film's release. Peggy Lee and Trudy Stevens sat in for Rosemary Clooney and Gloria Wood from the film's soundtrack. Supposedly Clooney's recording contract overrode her contract for her singing in the film itself.

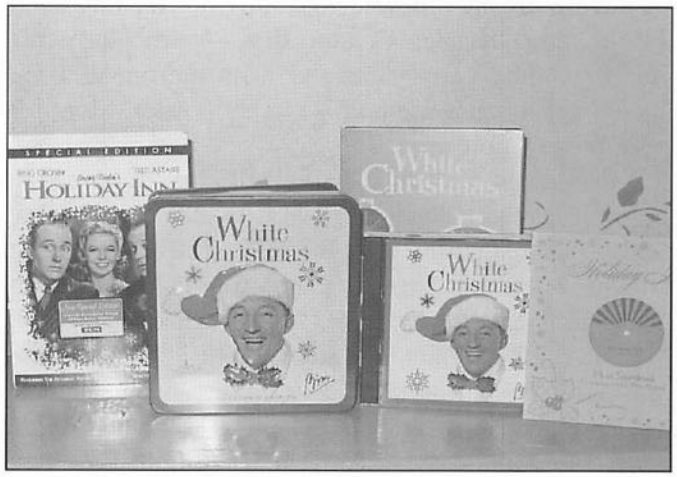
Among other Crosby packages:

By 2006, Bing's 1942 *Holiday Inn* was issued in the United States, four years after its European release, as an "all-new digitally remastered picture!" Universal (which owns Paramount releases until 1949) billed it as "one of the most enjoyable films of all time," which it may indeed be. Its added features included Ken Barnes and Ava Astaire segments. For the Crosby faithful, matters were looking up.

As Christmas, 2008, approached, that version of *Holiday Inn* emerged as the centerpiece of a package sold in the U.S. by the Book-of-the-Month Club. A

Canadian company, Madacy Entertainment, gathered the elements. In addition to the film, they included a CD and Christmas stocking cap, both in a tin box made in China. Bing's face was impressed on the cover of the box in vivid color, under the title, "White Christmas." That title also served on the cover of Universal's CD, which turned out to be a slightly expanded version of Bing's original holiday album. That had been known as "Merry Christmas" in earlier days. The order of songs was juggled a bit in the new release, and "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Here Comes Santa Claus" were added to the original 12 songs.

A similar package was offered for sale in retail stores, packed neatly into the "White Christmas" tin box. The Christmas stocking or stocking cap was more tersely described on the box as a Christmas hat. The expanded CD was given top billing on the box, with the black-and-white *Holiday Inn* taking second place as "the 1942 family classic." There was no suggestion in this package that the CD was the soundtrack of the film.



Some of the packages.

Last October, Universal unveiled its long-awaited colorized version of *Holiday Inn*, as documented well by Greg Van Beek in the winter edition of BING magazine. While that DVD can stand alone, it doesn't have to. In cooperation with TCM, Universal offered up a package including both the remastered black-and-white film (now billed as the "original version") and the colorized version. In addition, Universal threw in a third disc with songs "from the original soundtrack" of *Holiday Inn*. A holiday feast for Crosby fans.

On closer examination, the CD's songs from the "music soundtrack" and "timeless Irving Berlin soundtrack" were drawn not from the Paramount lot but from the Decca studio recordings made by Crosby, Astaire and company in 1942. On the Decca work, Margaret Lenhart sang for Marjorie Reynolds; Martha Mears did the singing in the film. I am not sharp-eared enough to say which version of "White Christmas" made the CD. No doubt the magazine's experts can.

It does seem that we are going through a redefinition of the term "soundtrack," which once meant the track at the side of the film. No doubt soundtracks on CDs can be a problem for CD producers on several counts. Timing used to be one; on-screen performances often ran longer than the three-minute limit for 78-r.p.m. records. Now as then, soundtracks often include unexplained voices and noises; they may not follow a typical Crosby format, in which Bing concludes each song with a final chorus; sometimes, also, there can be contract issues, as with Rosemary Clooney.

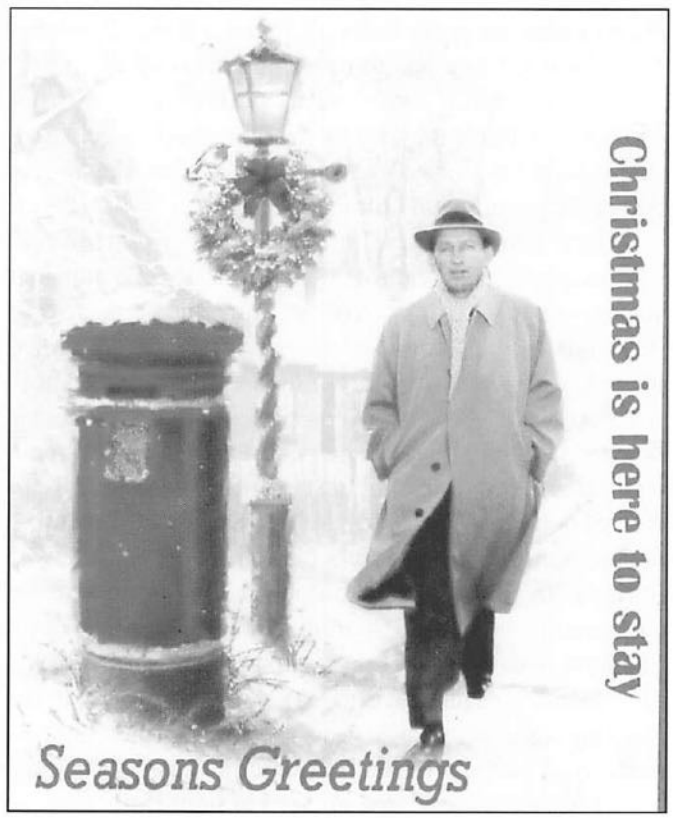
It would have been interesting to hear on CD along with DVD *Holiday Inn's* original soundtrack, which some might argue incorporates Bing's finest version of "White Christmas." But packagers probably seek a general audience, not just particular Bing fans.

There may be serious difficulties attracting a general audience to *Holiday Inn* in 2009. The film was released three years before blackface performances were driven out of Hollywood musicals as racially offensive. It includes Irving Berlin's "Abraham," sung by Bing in one of his several blackface performances over the years. There might be editing tricks to get rid of the number or to make it less objectionable, but those could cost money or damage the integrity of the original, for what that may be worth.

In any case, the packages have arrived. Perhaps there will be more as the months go by.

Bob Achorn

(Editor: Bob's theme about soundtracks is also picked up by John Newton in the Letters section).



Arthur Blood's Christmas card to the editor

One Sweet Letter From You

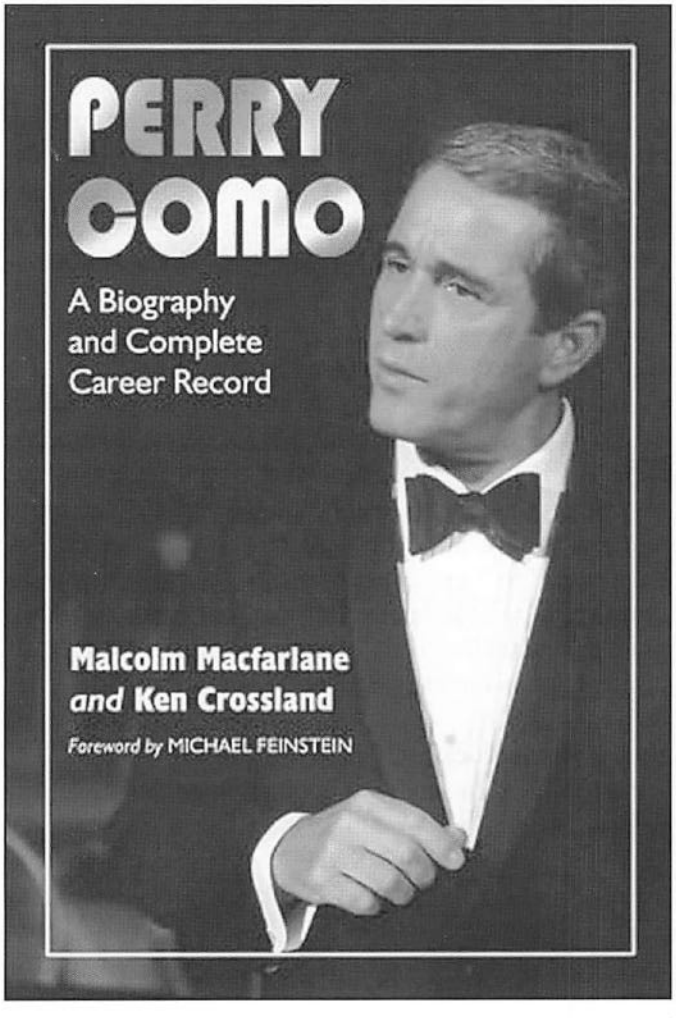
Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Ian B. Lawrence, Northfleet, Kent, UK

I'm just writing to say how much I enjoyed the CD "Bing Crosby Entertains – for Woodbury Soap", it's really great. I wish that we could hear all of "St. Louis Blues" with the Boswell Sisters, but it's a great CD.

I also like Michael Feinstein very much and have some of his CDs. I first heard of Michael when I saw him in a BBC Omnibus programme "George Gershwin Remembered" and have taken an interest in his career since then. He was born in the same year as myself 1956 and it was good to hear his favourites are Bing Crosby, Al Jolson, Fred Astaire and Rosemary Clooney. I'm pleased he is an honorary member of the ICC. I did see Michael on stage at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London on Saturday, 25th September 2004. A very enjoyable evening and he did mention Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra of course.

Loved BING #150 - as always, so much interesting and enjoyable reading. The cover (front and back) is really nice. I do not have a computer myself but I'm going to ask my brother if he could order the 3-disc box set of *Holiday Inn* from Amazon.



I enjoyed reading Bob Halls' report on the Leeds gathering this year, as you said his enthusiasm really comes through.

I have been a Crosby fan since the age of 12 and as a teenager I would listen to Crosby, Jolson, Sinatra etc. and still do of course. My four brothers who were into all the groups "Top Of The Pops" and so on, did not like my kind of music. It's interesting to me now that they are buying and listening to CDs of Sinatra and Nat King Cole, so as they are getting older their taste in music is getting better. It will make me very happy when they start listening to Bing!

I'm looking forward to reading your book (with Ken) "Perry Como, a Biography and Career Chronicle" next year. Perry has always been my Mum's favourite singer (she is coming up to her 78th birthday next year). *(Editor: Thanks for your kind words, Ian. The Perry Como book is being advertised by McFarland & Co (see www.mcfarlandpub.com/) as being available Spring/Summer 2009 at a price of $55. The title is 'Perry Como - A Biography and Complete Career Record'.*

Another to write about the Woodbury CD was Pete Cakanic.)

Pete Cakanic, Augusta, Georgia, USA

Thank you for your participation in this treasure for all of us in Bingdom. I have listened to it several times now and I imagined I was listening to it with, hopefully millions of others, while it was being broadcast. It was the depression and I was about 3 or 4 (and we didn't have a radio). But as Anthony Quinn said in one Bing tribute, "I was of the few who had a radio and I used to put it in the window when Bing was on and people would assemble below."

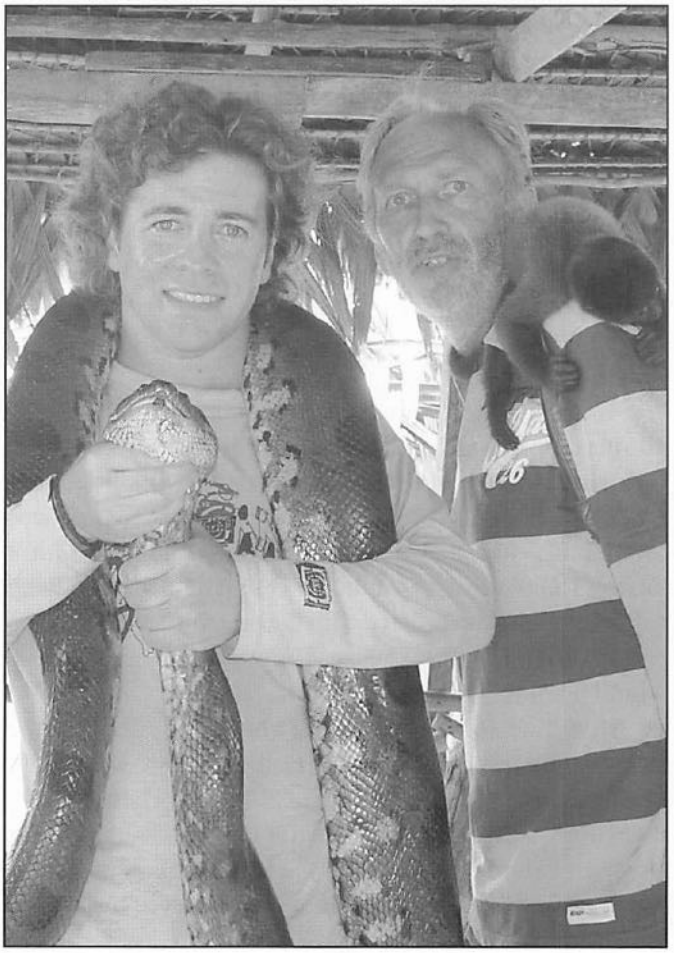
How I wish there was a full version of Bing and the Boswell Sisters singing "St. Louis Blues" Bing only scats on this but it shows (as in "Some of These Days") that Bing's scat singing was better than most and at least as good as Louie and Ella. What a great clarinet, sax or even jazz trumpet player he could have been. His whistling was always pure jazz.

Please convey my thanks to Geoff Milne and also please thank Michael Feinstein for making these classic radio transcriptions to us.

I'm still reading and re-reading the latest BING. Lots of great articles. Greg amazes me with what he comes up with each time.

David Currington, Turramurra, NSW, Australia

Thanks very much for the Woodbury CD. Yes, "St. Louis Blues" is one of those "if only" songs, but the rest...! Thane Cooper and I listened to "The Last Roundup" at least 8 times yesterday and he listened to it in my absence another dozen he reckons. We played "classic" tracks from this period - tracks that we've always considered the quintessential Bing - and Thane is right, this Woodbury version of "The Last Roundup" is THE performance to surpass all other Bing vocals. Quite a claim, I know, but it is true. Bing opens the song with gusto and continues in full, unfaltering voice for the entire song. Bing is there for every bar: there is no orchestral break as he whistles with the most sustained passage ever heard. The song calls for repeated soaring notes and Bing rings them like a mighty bell every time. He concludes the closing strains with an almighty sweep and ascent that lingers long in your ears after the track concludes. There is not one faltering note, nor the suggestion of any vocal weakness anywhere.



We've long maintained that the sessions of June and November 1933 were Bing's finest, but not one of the tracks laid down there (including the issued version of "The Last Roundup") can match the gusto of what we now have in this Woodbury track. Sure, there are other songs of this period which Bing sings brilliantly, and throwaway tunes which Bing turns into gems, but do the test for yourself - name another performance of Bing's where EVERY note is true and the reading is such that virtually every passage calls for and receives such tremendous vocal power. I say "virtually" because the final use of "I'm headin' for the last roundup" is deliberately hushed for dramatic effect, instantly building to the final, powerhouse cry.

And to feel that this track for all intents and purposes has been lost for 75 years and now there are few around to appreciate this track for what it is. It would be nice to think that somehow some more unknown Bing tracks may appear, but I honestly can't imagine being enraptured by any other track. This is the ultimate!

(Editor: Well. I certainly agree that "The Last Roundup" is a very special track and our thanks are due to Michael Feinstein for allowing us to make it available to members. Incidentally, Thane Cooper is working in Peru at present and David went over to see him last October. Here's a photo of the two of them visiting a nature park in the jungle. Thane is the one with the snake.)

Roy Chappell, Cheadle, Cheshire, UK

Many thanks for sending Bing's Woodbury CD so quickly – it's really great, especially two songs my dad used to sing – "Out In The Cold Again" and "Maybe I'm Wrong Again". They brought tears to my vintage eyes!

Mike O'Donoghue, Romford, Essex, UK

I felt I had to express my gratitude to every one concerned in giving us this great Woodbury CD. What a marvellous and unexpected surprise to hear Bing warbling so many great songs in what was probably his vocal prime.

I have always thought he was at his peak at the time he recorded 'Maybe I'm Wrong again' and 'Easy To Remember', listening to the CD only substantiates this.

Now if someone somewhere can give us a similar CD of his 1935 radio shows then I will really believe in Santa Claus!

Ken Brown, Pinner, Middlesex, UK

I am writing to let you know how very much delighted I am with the CD *Bing Crosby Entertains.* Bing is in superb voice, and the sound quality of the transfers, thanks to Geoff Milne & Co is quite remarkable. It's amazing that these private recordings have come to light after so many years. My sincere thanks go to Michael Feinstein for making these treasures available to us, and to everyone involved in producing this outstanding CD!

Barry Sandercock, St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, UK

I felt I had to send you another email as I have just listened to the Bing Woodbury soap CD you sent me.

It is absolutely SENSATIONAL. The fans owe a great debt of gratitude to those who put it together and to your goodself for distributing it. I am now 78 years old and have been listening and collecting his records for

most of my life, also seeing him at the London Palladium, and have never enjoyed that incredible voice more.

I'm just getting over the flu, so that was the best tonic I could have had!

(Other comments about the Woodbury CD were seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum, including this from Jim Martindale.)

Jim Martindale, Pebble Beach, CA, USA

The International Club Crosby has given Bing's fans a remarkable gift with the release of the Woodbury Soap songs and extracts. The quality of these recordings is, for the most part, much better than anyone expected and the songs themselves are remarkable to hear. Frankly the last three gems, added bonus tracks from The Union Oil Show September 25, 1932, are worth the price of the CD alone. Outstanding to hear Bing with Eddie Lang and Lennie Hayton on piano. One song from the Woodbury Shows which is a delight to hear is Bing's version of "If I Had A Million Dollars" which until now I really liked Al Bowlly's version...but Bing really is at the peak of his powers on this and so many of these songs. The first opening bit features Bing singing a few bars of "For All We Know" and when you hear this you know right away that you are about to hear an incredible collection of Bing singing with full voice on all of the songs to come.

Thank you Malcolm and of course Wig Wiggins and the greatest thanks belongs to Michael Feinstein who made this possible due to his generous heart and devotion to Bing. It's been the fans and continues to be the fans that are the ones that keep Bing's memory alive and I hope everyone will join the ICC, it's only 25 dollars US, and then please buy this CD which is history illustrating young Bing when his voice was simply...perfect!

No profits are being made in this effort which speaks volumes as to the character of those that truly respect Bing's legacy. Anyone who claims affection and appreciation for Bing should join this fine organization that does so much with no personal profit or gain involved for anyone, simply out of respect and affection for the greatest voice that ever graced radio, records, film, and television. This CD, combined with the Jonzos and now the Sepia Series is really exceptional and I want to thank the ICC for its efforts to do so much to keep Bing's memory alive. You are to be congratulated for your selfless dedication.

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

I'll begin by thanking you and all concerned with producing the last issue of BING magazine. As always, there's much to please anyone interested in popular entertainment and Bing especially, so much that I feel a bit guilty commenting on just one article. Here goes!

John Newton's 'Face the Music myths' on some of the Brunswick issues reminded me that by the end of 1934, because Brunswick (Australia) went 'bust' in 1931, only 44 of the 105 songs Bing had recorded for Brunswick had been released here. Only thirteen more from the Brunswick sessions were pressed as singles in Australia during the next eighteen years. The thirteen included 'Sweet Georgia Brown' with 'Some of These Days' in 1935, 'A Ghost of a Chance' with 'Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn' in 1935, 'St Louis Blues' with the Duke Ellington Orchestra's 'Creole Love Call' in 1939 and then 'You're Getting to be a Habit with Me' with You've Got Me Crying Again' in 1948. If the last release suggests that Aussies were a patient lot, they had to wait even longer until the 1950s to buy the others. Most were pressed on the Columbia label. Bing's 'Face the Music medley' was never released here as a single.

Some time ago (must be many months) I came across the following, which I don't think I've sent you previously. It concerns Risë Stevens on Bing Crosby.

When interviewed by Jerome Hines (probably in the late 1970s) the subject of the opera singer's appearance in several films was raised. Commenting on the differences in the two art forms, she said:

> "Everyone asked me if I enjoyed making films. In essence, no! I didn't like what they called routine. The continuity was never there. I felt an enormous lack of reaction from the audience. I used to look at Bing Crosby and say, 'You know, you're remarkable, because you put on a performance for the cameraman and everyone who's in the studio, and very seldom do you get a reaction from them', because they were so involved in moving cameras and lights ... it was just routine with them. But he did a number as though there was an audience and they were going to respond. I could not do that. I felt this terrible lack, and the fact that you repeated and repeated. The film is put in incorrectly, or technically the light didn't work. By the time they shoot the thing you're exhausted."

Risë Stevens, of course, appeared with Bing in *Going My Way*. The interview was published in Jerome Hines' book, 'Great Singers On Great Singing' (Victor Gollancz, London, 1983, page 316) which documents his interviews with dozens of opera singers.

Frank Startup, Cirencester, UK

Thank you very much for the 2008 editions of BING - it seems to me that the magazine goes from strength to strength. I'm sorry that I didn't write earlier in the year - 2008 has not been the best or years for me for a variety of reasons, and I have been somewhat distracted, hut renewing my subscription has prompted me to write now to express my appreciation.

It's been an exciting year, beginning with what seemed like a message of solidarity from Mary Crosby, the hint that she and Nancy Sinatra might be teaming up for promotion purposes, and the website, followed by the excellent 'Sepia' continuation of Jonzo, for which,

again, Crosby admirers owe you a huge debt of gratitude. News of the possibly imminent release of 'Seasons' on CD, the Feinstein Woodbury discs and the new edition of *Holiday Inn* continued the high.

All great stuff, but then a late bombshell: I visited the Redmond Nostalgia site and found that all the Crosby radio show CDs had been removed from sale, apparently at the command of lawyers representing the family or the Crosby organisation. Do we know what's happening?

I've just received the 2009 calendar, which is excellent, and I am looking forward to the CD, and to another year of BING under your superb editorship. I wonder what 2010 will bring?

Have a great Christmas and New Year.

(Editor: The Redmond Nostalgia situation isn't as sinister as it looks. Mark Brodka, Mary Crosby's husband, contacted Redmond and asked if they would mind stopping selling the post 1954 radio shows. These are owned by Bing Crosby Enterprises and they have plans to sell them themselves (which is excellent news). The conversation was amicable but for some reason Redmond withdrew all the earlier shows as well. Greg Van Beek has seen the Redmond Nostalgia mailer dated Winter 2008 and a note on the top of the first page says:

> *"Unfortunately our recent sales have declined dramatically. This will most likely be our last mailer. If you were considering purchasing any items from us we suggest placing an order in the near future as we are uncertain about how long we will be in business."*

This is very disappointing but we cannot blame Bing Crosby Enterprises for this.)

Monsignor Robert Murphy, by email.

I read, with great interest, in the winter 2008 issue of BING about all the controversy surrounding the album "Hey Jude/Hey Bing". I was invited to the Crosby home on New Year's Day 1969 and they had just received advance copies of this album. Bing put them on the record player and sang along. I was amazed at the selections. I had read about this album in, I believe, Time magazine and the producer Jimmy Bowen. He was described as a bit of a whizz kid in his work with Frank and Dean. I can't say I was bowled over by the selections but I was by Bing singing along!

I told him of an article that I had written for the Kansas City Star in 1964 entitled "Der Bingle versus Der Beatles". I wrote that as a 16 year old teenager I still thought Bing was head and shoulders above those new upstarts, the Beatles. You can't imagine all the razzing I got from my friends. At one point, I excused myself to go the bathroom. When I came back, Bing said: "I heard you singing in there." I just laughed and said: "Well, I stuck my head in the shower just to see if it's true: that everyone sounds like you in the shower!" After playing a few more selections from "Hey Jude/Hey Bing" we took his black labradors for a walk and then watched the Rose Bowl on T.V. Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour were the Grand Marshalls and Curt Gowdy wondered where "the third famous member of the Road Pictures" was at this very moment. Bing just laughed. What a memory for me!

Norman Wolfe, by email from Cumming, Georgia, USA

A note to say that I am enjoying the latest edition of the mag which I got into last evening. My compliments and—since I realize you eagerly await them—my impressions!

I have never liked the picture used for the front cover, but I love the back cover montage. *Holiday Inn* in color - wonderful and I must order it. If only they could de-color the black face scenes, they'd have just about the perfect musical.

I love the photo on the editorial page and I was pleased to read about the Pairpoint data now being on the net. What marvelous resources for future scholars.

There are excellent articles by Martin McQuade, John Newton and Mark Steyn. I have always liked "Soft Lights and Sweet Music" but knew nothing of its background. It just pops up so unexpectedly and is so easily done, it catches you unaware and your reaction is "was that as good as I think it was?"

I feel that way about another song Arne Fogel mentions: "Just for Tonight." I am so glad to have him bring attention to it since it is a little gem rarely noticed by anyone, perhaps because it comes casually within a welter of so-so work and Crosby sort of tosses it off.

I have always felt that same way about "Two Shadows on the Sand" from that Holiday in Europe album. Boom - vintage Crosby suddenly when you no longer think it possible.

I disagree with Sepia's assessment of "More I Cannot Wish You" which I cringe from.

Mark Steyn's article is fascinating. How the guys from that era drank! Why do you suppose? The formula for beautiful music appears to have been booze and cigarettes. Steyn is a pragmatic writer, good for a fan-zine which must constantly fight a temptation to adore mindlessly.

I am ambivalent about "Hey Jude" but generally feel it does not work. I am not indecisive about the album with Bregman. I think the arrangements ruin superb vocals. Orchestration should never overwhelm the vocal. Who bought the album to hear Buddy Bregman? Raise your hand.

Lastly, judging by the various accounts and references, the Leeds meeting was a success due, in large measure to your efforts which apparently were properly recognized. I know it's a labor of love but labor is still labor.

(Editor: Feedback like this from Norman is always appreciated. The last issue did appear to create a lot of

debate which is a good thing. The new 'Holiday Inn' package also brought forth lots of comments including the following on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.)

William Carroll, Denham Springs, Louisiana, USA

I just watched the new colorized *Holiday Inn* and I am blown away. It is truly amazing. The documentary on the Disc 2 is very interesting, too - for instance, Legend Films rounded up a former assistant to Edith Head for input on properly colorizing the suits, fashions and costumes! I was somewhat amused at the brief nod given to "the staff in India", who apparently did the bulk of the actual color-tinting work - they're briefly seen on a large TV monitor - looking, to me, sorta like Ground Control checking in with the crew of the International Space Station.

The short Ken Barnes documentaries on Disc 1 are nice, but his running commentary through the b&w version is loaded with all sorts of fascinating goodies about the film and the folks involved with its production!

I played the CD packed in with the set - which is presented in a novel way - its sleeve looks like an old paper 78RPM sleeve, and the disc looks like a tiny record! The last track, "White Christmas", is the obscure, ORIGINAL 1942 version, first released on MCA's 2-CD Crosby Decca Christmas set a few years ago. BUT!!! To me, here, it sounds even crisper and clearer than before!

Does anyone else agree? They must've run that well-worn 78 through some pretty amazing 2008 sound technology!

Editor: Others who commented were:

Jane Stoutenborough, USA

I have just watched the newly colorized version of *Holiday Inn* for the second time and I would describe the color version as having a water color effect, not transparent, but soft, not garish and there is a flow to the colors. They have soft edges if that makes sense to any one who has painted. And they make the movie come alive. Nicely done.

David Lobosco, USA

I watched the colorized version of *Holiday Inn*, and I must say it was terrific. I admit I was a critic of colorizing, but Barry Sandrew's company did an excellent job. On the extras on the making of the colorizing process, Barry is even interviewed.

I am 34 but with an old soul, so I have always been an old movie fan. My wife is 30 and she has been hesitant to watch some B&W movies. I hope this version of *Holiday Inn* sells well, because there are many great Bing Crosby movies that would look great in color. Now that I have this new version of *Holiday Inn*, I will never watch the old B&W version again. Once again, I 100% recommend this version to everyone. Please support this DVD. You will not be disappointed!

Sue Horn, Lawrenceville, GA, USA

My husband, son and I decided to watch *Holiday Inn* last night in color as a way to celebrate everyone's being home, and it was beautiful. It is funny how there are small details that were always there that you never notice without seeing them in color. Bing's (Jim's) tie in the one of the early scenes, where his dance partner and soon-to-be farmer's wife Lila tells him to go change it because he's not a farmer yet, is yellow and brown (truly hideous). What I'd never noticed before is that it is covered with golf clubs! I'll bet Bing had a bit of a say in choosing that part of his wardrobe. Maybe it was the tie that convinced Lila that she couldn't give up show biz to marry Jim, but that is the device that sends the plot in motion and lets us enjoy many, many Irving Berlin songs and dance numbers. Another detail that had slipped by me before were the colorful and festive balloons decorating the Inn on opening night (New Year's Eve), but I'd never even noticed they were there when I saw them in shades of gray. The set for the Fourth of July, full of patriotic hues, and the newsreel clips which were left in black-and-white, with the exception of the American flag flying in all her glory at the end, all of these were great uses of color that were done naturally and with much attention to detail. Kudos to those who did this job, and kudos to the Crosby family for choosing the best at their craft to restore this film.

Other surprises for me, I hadn't realized how brown Linda Mason's (Marjorie Reynolds') eyes are. I guess you know that when you see the movie in black and white, but it is much more striking in color. The musical numbers all come to life more with the added dimension. I'm glad they didn't try for the Technicolor look because what they achieved was much more natural and beautiful. Bing's eyes were blue, but not so photo-shopped that they made him look possessed (which is how some of the photos I've seen on the web recently look). The animated bits with the calendar that are the transition from one holiday to the next are much more enjoyable in color too. All in all, it was wonderful. When you get a chance, watch the fascinating mini-documentary showing how they made some of the choices they made regarding the color.

The only downside to the addition of color is that some of the sets where a backdrop was used are now more obviously that. How funny that the color in the 'Easter Parade' number made me realize that they weren't actually shooting outside! The many crates and boxes that are moved around are now in the right hue, but somehow seeing the guys pick them up and put them down a bit too effortlessly in color makes it sooooo obvious that they were empty, a small detail that I didn't notice and forgave in black-and-white. I guess that's the key, some things that are obvious devices to further the plot can be gotten away with in black-and-white, but

become more evident in color.

One more comment on the color and please remember that I have never been a fan of colorization, but this film really sold me on how it can be great for a movie that was made in black-and-white for no particular reason other than budgetary constraints. After seeing this one in a variety of hues, I truly believe the original vision of this movie was to shoot it in color. Look at the costumes. There are so many small details that need the contrast of color to be noticed. In the firecracker dance number, I'd never noticed there were stars on Ted's socks before! The floor reflects the red-white-and-blue decorations, which is impossible to see without color. Fred Astaire's athleticism and perfect style in this number is definitely enhanced by the subtle addition of color. Even those scenes where there isn't much color, like the outdoor shots of the Inn itself, or the scenes that were shot at nighttime looking out on the snow through the Inn's windows, are so beautiful with a touch of color. The snow looked more sparkly and magical, though the palette was probably changed only slightly to add a bit of blue and silver to the grays and whites.

So, see this one again in color, remember what a good movie it is, then introduce someone else to it who hasn't seen it yet. I know I will probably watch it in black and white again just to hear the great commentary by Ken Barnes and Fred Astaire's daughter, Ava, but watching it in color is a great experience too, and added a lot to a movie that I thought I knew backwards and forwards already.

Alice Kane, Marengo, IL USA

I was delighted with this year's winter edition of BING, as it informed me of the new 3-disk set of the colorized version of *Holiday Inn*. I had not heard the wonderful news before my copy of Bing arrived in the mail. It certainly pays to be a member of the ICC!

I went right out and bought myself a copy of this wonderful new 3-disk set. There are several reasons I'm so delighted with it. First of all is the colorized version of this favorite old classic. They sure did a terrific job! But we also get to see and hear an interview between Ken Barnes, of whom I'd heard so much about but never actually saw the man himself, and Fred Astaire's daughter, Ava Astaire-MacKenzie, of whom I'd never heard. I think it's always nice to meet the star's adult children.

The audio commentary is great as well. More of Ken Barnes as well as comments by Bing himself, Fred Astaire and John Scott Trotter! Such a treat! We get to see how the colorization was accomplished as well as seeing the original movie trailer. And last but certainly not least is the musical CD containing all the great songs from the movie. I keep that one permanently in my CD player!

There is just nothing not to like about this great set. And I owe it all to being a member of the ICC and receiving Bing magazine. Without it I don't know when, if ever, I would have heard about the colorization of *Holiday Inn*.

Thanks for putting out such a great magazine for all us Bing Crosby fans! I plan to be a member of the Club for the rest of my life.

Alice proudly holds her BING magazine

John Newton, Delaware, USA (by email).

With my omnipresent interest in Bing soundtracks, I played the 3rd disc in the *Holiday Inn* set, just to see if they used the actual soundtrack or the pre-recordings that are often different from what ultimately appeared in the film(s).

A few examples from the pre-recording discs for *Holiday Inn*:

1. No audible dance steps that were dubbed in later.

2. The bell notes when Bing's pipe strikes the bells on the Christmas tree during "White Christmas" that were dubbed in at a later point and do not appear in the original pre-recording disc.

3. The pre-recording disc containing "Let's Start The New Year Right" is an alternate take/version of the song, sung at a slower tempo. The version in the film lasts approximately 49 seconds, while the alternate take lasts about 70 seconds.

With all this in mind, I was rather surprised to hear that the "soundtrack" disc contained the Decca recordings for the Decca 'Holiday Inn' album. I'd guess

that whoever put the package together just didn't know, or care, about any difference between soundtrack recordings and recording studio versions.... and, I'm sure, they don't have the discs anyway.

Interestingly, several years ago, during a visit to California, I was at a swap meet/flea market and happened to start speaking with an older gentleman who was looking at some old records. He told me that he was retired from Paramount Pictures. My ears perked up when he told me that he'd been in the music department and, inquiring further, specifically about Bing, the fellow told me that he'd worked with Ellsworth Hoagland who was the film editor for *Holiday Inn* and other films/musicals at Paramount. He then told me that when Mr. Hoagland retired, back in the 1960's, he'd given this gentleman the set of "track discs for *Holiday Inn*" that Hoagland had used when working on the film.

When I asked if he still had the records he said that he hadn't seen them in years, but was pretty certain that they were stored away somewhere in his garage. I expressed my extreme interest in the records, and he promised to make a search as soon as he had the chance. We exchanged names/addresses/telephone numbers, and I maintained contact after returning home to Delaware. He ultimately found the records, agreed to sell them to me, and I sent him a box-within-a-box to safely transport the records cross-country. When the records arrived there were also Paramount records from other Paramount films of the period, including some discs containing pre-recordings for *Birth Of The Blues* and *Road To Morocco* among the others.

I thought you might find this interesting, Malcolm, happenstance begetting re-discovery!

Earlier today I was again listening to the marvelous Woodbury songs that Michael Feinstein kindly provided for Bing enthusiasts (can a CD wear out?). While listening perhaps a bit closer than previously, I noted that in Bing's singing of "A New Moon Is Over My Shoulder" he sings an incorrect lyric. In Bing's version he sings that a new moon makes lovers "grow colder", whereas the correct lyric would have the lovers "grow *bolder*". Quite a difference for the lovers!

From time to time, Bing tended to sing what seemed to "fit" at the moment, and he carried this off splendidly in most situations. This was carried off similarly during his first Decca recording session, when he recorded "Let Me Call You Sweetheart". ... On the "A" take that was issued he sang "in your eyes so <u>blue</u>" in both choruses... while in the unissued "B" take he sings "your eyes so <u>true</u>" in both choruses. ... In this case, either word tends to "fit" perfectly.

Walter Schultz, Vancouver, Canada

I'm mailing you a DVD copy of "Bing goes Bang"' which is the promotional film of Bing's 1948 trip to Vancouver and his efforts to raise funds for the Sunset Community Centre. This is a copy of the film which we found at the bottom of the Sunset time capsule. There are no songs on the DVD but it includes footage of Bing at City Hall, at the Sunset ground breaking and Bing in Indian headdress dancing on stage. The Vancouver archives have advised us that this DVD might still be under copyright so this DVD is intended for your private use. I have attached a copy of the letter they sent me, discussing the legal issues involving the film.

Thank you once again for all your interest in our little Bing Crosby story. Our community is very proud of our connection to Bing. Thank you also for the copy of the BING magazine #148, I've enjoyed reading it.

In closing I want to leave you with a little thought of Bing from my home:

Today my youngest daughter finished her semester exams at University and she announced at the dinner table that we could now listen to Christmas music in our house. Without any encouragement from my wife or me she put on a Bing Crosby Christmas CD. Since I was in the process of finishing this email to you I thought I would asked her why she choose Bing Crosby over all the other Christmas CD's in the house.

She said, quite simply "because Bing Crosby is the Best"!

Bing Crosby truly was a special entertainer, to be touching the lives of young people so many years after his death.

Leslie Miller, Bournemouth, Dorset UK

Having recently watched and enjoyed the recent screening of *The Bells of St. Mary's*, I decided to look up the review in the Radio Times Guide To Films - this is what it says

> "A massively popular success in its day, this pairs Bing Crosby with Ingrid Bergman. Crosby reprises the role that won him an Oscar, that of wise and loveable Father O'Malley from *Going My Way*. Today Crosby's priest seems rather insufferable as he helps Sister Ingrid fix up her rundown mission with a bit of song and lots of charm. Crosby fans will brook no arguments of course, but others may feel director Leo McCarey has his tongue well and truly in his cheek and only made this for money."

I can't help feeling that tells us all we need to know about today's society, when this beautiful heart-warming film is viewed in such a cynical way.

Whither the Leeds meeting?

Bob Halls gives us the results of his questionnaire.

At the 2008 Annual Conference I offered to canvas members about their attendance, or non-attendance at the Leeds venue, together with their views on the venue itself, the time of the year and what might persuade them to attend future conferences. Alongside this survey, in

the shape of a questionnaire in the winter edition of BING magazine was an invitation to set out in writing member recollections and experiences of Bing Crosby and what impact he had made on their lives.

I was unsure of the level of response we would receive, but a package from Michael in the New Year containing sixty returned questionnaires, many very comprehensively completed, answered the question quite adequately, especially when one considers the small amount of time between delivery of the magazine and returns being sent back.

Putting it simply, I have enough information to write a book such was the enthusiasm for the project. Some returns contained four or five page additions! Consequently I decided to divide the analysis into two sections, the responses to the conference questions, for the spring issue and members' recollections and experiences following later in the year. This is basically to give me time to do justice to the many interesting comments received. I found reading the material quite intriguing, heart warming and stimulating. Not all the comments were congratulatory, one or two even contained some negative appraisals of Bing's life. So worth waiting for I believe, and remember, don't shoot the messenger! I'll only quote verbatim!

So what emerged from the questionnaire, particularly surrounding attendance or non-attendance at the Leeds venue, the October date, the price, travelling issues, to just not knowing anyone, or fear of the unknown?

Overwhelmingly, the huge, and expected response, was age and health related, with members, some in their eighties and nineties citing this as the main reason for not attending the conference. Travel implications came a close second, with many people who would love to attend unable to drive, or fearing long journeys either by car, or by public transport, which in some cases proved so difficult that the actual journey from home, or abroad took longer than the actual conference itself. There were also some who were afraid to travel on their own, especially in October when the darker nights create their own problems and a significant number of others who had wanted to come, but felt they would not know anyone. This was a real barrier to attendance. Most were comfortable with the conference fee and meal price, and even the cost of an overnight stay. But understandably, for those having to travel long distances, the overall cost would be prohibitive. There were quite a number of returns with preferences for London area venues, also Carlisle and Dublin. However there was recognition of the efforts of conference organisers, Michael and Malcolm and understanding of the need for the venue to be in the area they reside. Two returns highlighted a need for a map, perhaps in the magazine, to the Leeds venue, with a Swedish request for flight and route suggestions.

So what's new, you might ask! All this could have been highlighted without the need of a survey, and what could be done about it anyway? Well, in the last issue of BING, Malcolm set out his thoughts on how he would like to see the conference go in the future, and also registered the concern of those attending last year about declining numbers and the future of the event. You can appreciate that, if there is any way club members' attendance at this wonderful day might be facilitated, it will be worth all the effort.

The following might be food for thought and are direct responses from the questionnaires. Facilitation might involve a little effort and co-ordination at local level, but who knows, if just a handful of new attendees came to Leeds, had a stress free journey and felt secure among like minded friends, more might follow suite. At present, it may be impractical to move the date and venue, something which could have huge implications for Malcolm and Michael, who already put in hours of work on our behalf and to keep Bing's music and career alive for today's audience.

What about these suggestions?

Car sharing Members from the London area, Brighton and Essex, plus one in the North East might consider coming and would contribute toward fuel if they could get a lift. I know this happens anyway, but could we be more proactive and be a local source for information on possible car sharing. Any volunteers?

Hiring of coaches/mini buses An Essex member might attend if members from that area would hire a coach, or mini bus for the trip. This may be expensive, but judging from the number of returns from the London area, how many would it take to reduce the cost to a minimum? Your thoughts, do you know all members in your local area?

Travelling companions There was a good response from Ireland, some who found the thought of travelling alone very unappealing. How many other members at home or abroad might come along if they had someone to travel with? Could we publish a list of members willing to befriend someone put off by fear of travelling alone, or fear of being alone in the company of people they don't know? We know for sure that once they get there, any such feelings will evaporate within minutes of being welcomed.

Times of Conference Another strong barrier was travelling late at night, especially for those who, for various reasons, including health issues and cost, baulked at an overnight stay. Again I would draw attention to Malcolm's thoughts in the last magazine, but quite a few members stated a preference for an earlier start and earlier finish, with a lunch provided, rather than evening meal. Again food for thought, excuse the pun!

One member was very critical of the administration of the conference and magazine and I felt it right to include those comments in the interests of impartiality. I quote 'Frankly I feel I'd be out of my depth with members whose wives shop in New York and Washington. There are poorer members you know. The

conference is far too dear for the Hoi Polloi, I'd have to sell the family heirlooms.' Further comments relate to the magazine compilers, but have little relevance to the questions posed in the questionnaire. My personal defence would be my knowledge of the generous, often anonymous donations forwarded to the secretary, plus offers of assistance to any members, who for whatever reason, hard times, ill health, bereavement etc, cannot afford to attend.

So to the last suggestion, this one from me;

Financial Assistance Many, including myself would probably gladly and very quietly, with no fuss and nobody else, other than the secretary knowing about it, offer help where appropriate and at his discretion, to enable someone else to enjoy this event. It happens anyway, but you may just not have thought about it before. It's not charity, or patronisation, it's what we are all about, along with Bing's music and memory, we are a like-minded 'band of brothers' (sorry....and sisters!!!!!).

All replies to the Secretary please.

Bob Halls

(Editor: Our thanks to Bob for undertaking the task of collating the results of the survey. We look forward to his article about members' recollections and experiences in the next issue. The geographical location of the event is not a problem for me. The meeting takes place in Leeds because it always has done so and we now have very good facilities for playing audio and video at a reasonable price. If an alternative venue of the same standard at a similar cost could be found, this would be perfectly acceptable to me. The ultimate decision lies with Michael Crampton. He started it all and we owe it to him to have the final say based on the comments received.)

BING ON THE BOX

Though some four months removed from the event Christmas is always going to be predominant in this column of the Spring issue of BING magazine. Despite the recession, over the merry jingle of the tills, including Woolworth's closing down sale, can be heard yet still the man we have always called 'The Voice Of Christmas'. It is a time when Bing comes into his own in a very public fashion. Yes, I know that the likes of Slade, Mud, Wham and Band Aid do get quite a few plays and I notice that *Santa Baby* is creeping up the popularity scale, too, but the grand old man of seasonal songs is hanging in there. Indeed, I came out of one shop straight into another and there was Bing with his annual favourite not missing a beat! But apart from the expected there were also a few surprises.

"BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS RADIO" ON SIRIUS XM

The big news since our last issue is that Bing Crosby Christmas Radio on SIRIUS channel 113 and XM channel 120 in the U.S.A. featured a non-stop broadcast of more than twenty years of vintage Bing Crosby holiday radio specials! These were hosted exclusively for SIRIUS XM by the Crosby family and included a wide variety of Crosby's beloved music with special guests like Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland and Bob Hope among others. Bing Crosby Christmas Radio was aired beginning December 13 at 12 midnight ET to Christmas Day, December 25. Subsequently they added a special guest DJ - Regis Philbin – who introduced some of Bing's old holiday radio programmes and spun a few of his favorite Bing-songs! Regis was quoted as saying "I always loved Bing Crosby and I can't wait to host this channel and share exclusive material with the SIRIUS XM audience, Growing up, I wanted to be Bing Crosby. I heard him on the radio every night. I loved the music and the sound of his voice. He made me feel better, and I love the songs he sang."

It was delightful to hear Kathryn, Harry, Nathaniel and Mary (and especially her young sons who proudly introduced their grandfather!) linking the shows which included Kraft, Philco, Chesterfield and GE broadcasts plus some of the 'Christmas Sing With Bing' specials. A rarity was the re-broadcast of Bing and Dixie at home with their boys on Christmas morning, 1938. Harry Crosby introduced the first-ever broadcast of "White Christmas" from the Kraft show of December 25, 1941 which must be the first time it's been heard on radio since then. Sadly, the audio fidelity was very poor which was a real shame. Generally however, the quality of the shows heard was first class and let's hope that this exercise can be repeated next year, although there were rumours that Sirius had financial problems as we went to press.

Elsewhere in the USA, National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition" featured a story on Elko, Nevada, and its stars, the biggest of whom was Bing, in December. Martin McQuade provides further details later in this issue.

Greg Van Beek's seventh annual Bing Crosby Christmas Special on Tom Shanahan's Club 60 Show over WTKM radio in Hartford, WI (104.9 FM and streamed online at http://www.wtkm.com) was aired live on Monday December 22nd from 8:30 to 9:30am (CST). Editor Malcolm listened to it over the Internet and thoroughly enjoyed it even though the news of the severe weather in Wisconsin horrified him! If we had that kind of weather in the UK, the country would grind to a complete standstill.

And let's not forget Arne Fogel with his regular one hour of Bing on *Swing Shift* at KBEM Jazz 88 in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota 8 p.m. Saturdays which can be heard live or via the internet on the KBEM website.

CELLULOID CROSBY

As satellite transmission encompasses yet even more stations it does mean that many older films are becoming available for public viewing. Consequently, the chance of seeing some Bing on your small screen [although they're getting an awful lot bigger these days!] has increased considerably. Some that you might have seen, or missed, are as follows:

Here Come The Waves Nov. 26 Sky Movies Classics
High Society, Dec. 11, Turner Classic Movies
High Time, Nov. 25, HBO
Pennies from Heaven, Dec. 11, Turner Classic Movies
Pepe, Dec. 24, Telmun
Road to Bali, Dec. 12, Turner Classic Movies
That's Entertainment, Nov. 27, Turner Classic Movies
The Bells of St. Mary's, Dec. 11, 20, Turner Classic Movies
The Country Girl, Feb. 22, Turner Classic Movies
The Greatest Show on Earth, Feb. 25, HBO
The Road to Hong Kong, Jan. 22, Cinemax
White Christmas, Nov. 29, 30, Dec. 1, 19 Lifetime
White Christmas, Dec. 23, 25, ABC Family Channel

Bing and Cantinflas together in *Pepe*

KINGS OF COOL: THE CLASSIC CROONERS

Screened on BBC2 on Valentines Day, at 10.45 p.m. this nostalgic glimpse of the singing sophisticates of yesteryear was a welcome repeat for those among the viewing public who like a good song well sung and by us in the ICC in particular. First shown in 2004, and reported here in more detail then, a brief résumé of Bing being portrayed as Mr. Cool would not come amiss especially as the principle requirement of the programme's criteria was to be a hard drinking gadabout who knew how to put over a song, as Gary Giddins described Bing's early years later endorsed by Howard Crosby, Bing's nephew. Honor Blackman narrated throughout and being the most senior Bing was first up with the comment 'He wrote the first chapter of the Great American Song Book'. Also guesting was Mary Crosby who said that her father changed the way people sang and, later, that 'Frank Sinatra was very upfront saying that everything he learned he learned from Dad', and perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek, 'Of course, he couldn't hold a candle to my Dad!' Gary Giddins explained that Bing was everywhere; records, radio and films and that nobody else was in these fields simultaneously and at the top of each one. Howard made a point of rubbishing Gary Crosby's harmful book; but mud sticks and Bing's image was never the same after that - and maybe never will be. But we must keep trying. He had ten minutes of the fifty minute programme which included Frank, Dean Martin, Nat Cole and Tony Bennett all of whom, along with Bing, were a welcome inclusion in the Saturday night schedules.

As a footnote here; while watching a DVD of the Betty Grable / Don Ameche movie *Moon Over Miami* I noticed yet another reference to Bing in the words of a number written by Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin who wrote a number of songs for Bing so it's not surprising they included him in a lyric. Here sung by Charlotte Greenwood and Jack Haley, who have just fallen in love and are at sixes and sevens, the song is called "Is That Good?" and includes the lines 'I don't know sweet from swing, I don't know Kate from Bing.' That would be Kate Smith, I guess, 'The Songbird Of The South' who was in *The Big Broadcast* with Bing and for which film Robin and Rainger wrote some of the songs!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

BBC Television has always had a daily tea time magazine programme of sorts. Currently it is *The One Show*, not very imaginatively titled but, presumably so because it is on BBC1. It is hosted by twenty-something Christine Bleakley and forty-one-year-old Adrian Chiles and has a few speciality presenters of topical subjects and a daily celebrity guest, usually promoting a new book, programme or play, etc. In the two week run up to Christmas the 'team' decided they were going to write and perform a Christmas single and drew on the lyrical and musical talents from the entertainment world to advise them on what elements in past successes were essential components of a memorable song. There had to be what is known as a 'hook', i.e. a memorable line or phrase, repeated within the lyric, which listeners could immediately latch on to. Remarkably, among the plethora of more modern hits, Irving Berlin's enduring song, as performed by Bing, had excerpts played on three occasions, with the line 'I'm dreaming of a white Christmas' being considered as the hook line. On each occasion Adrian Chiles was fulsome in his praise of Mr. Crosby, and even Christine spoke of 'dear old Bing'. But when it came to the point where the team went into the Maida Vale Studio to perform their song the camera panned to a brass memorial plaque acknowledging Bing's final chapter. It was then that Adrian uttered the words, "I can't believe that I'm recording in the same studio where Bing Crosby made his last record."

DERBY DAY

Well, we're a few months away from that but you can always make Sunday evenings, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on 104.5 FM your very own Derby Day by tuning in to

Mike Carey who is a permanent presenter at BBC Radio Derby where whole segments of Bing radio programmes are oftimes heard. The Chesterfield broadcast of the 7th December 1949 was one such that Mike delved into for songs and dialogue that included an off microphone Hopalong Cassidy, Bing and Peggy Lee getting in the seasonal frame of mind with "Here Comes Santa Claus" and a seasonally parodied "Manana". Bing soloed "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" and "A Dreamer's Holiday" with nice backing from the Rhythmaires. Ken Carpenter was on hand to keep it all in hand and music, as ever from the rotund John Scott Trotter. Bing always was a jazzer opined Mike at the conclusion of "I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes", a song written and composed by Alvin Pleasant Carter, one of the Carter family trio that popularised country and western singing in the 'Twenties and 'Thirties with Bing backed here by Woody Herman's Woodchoppers and coupled on the original [treasured] 78 by "It Makes No Difference Now" supported by Bob Crosby. It doesn't get much better than that! Mike also came up with an unusual item in Tommy Mara singing "Where The Blue Of The Night"; a brave man but he made a good job of it as just how many non-Bing versions have *you* heard? Memorable Melodies indeed.

Have you heard of Bobby Gordon? Well, he has an album out entitled BOBBY GORDON PLAYS BING and from this collection Howard Leader of BBC Radio Lincolnshire selected "I'm An Old Cowhand" and "Just One Of Those Things". Not too often heard on the wireless is "That's What Life Is All About" but Howard treated his listeners to Bing's philosophical statement on his programme which is usually more uptempo tracks than ballads.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

One of the Crosby stalwarts among programme presenters is Anne Hopper of BBC Radio Cumbria. If you contact Anne with a request you can guarantee that it *will* be played. Some of us have done so and have been delighted by the personalised response either on the air or by correspondence. For example members' chosen tracks for the Yuletide season were "The Secret Of Christmas", "O Holy Night" with the added bonus of "We Wish You The Merriest" and on the cusp of 2009 "Let's Start The New Year Right". The Bushkin blow-up version of "Personality", "I Whistle A Happy Tune" and "Without A Word Of Warning" were further requests that didn't fall on deaf ears among the thirty or so Bing songs that have been played on her programme - including the title that heads this paragraph and "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime", chosen as a chilling reminder of the depression years of the 1930s. Anne has been very generous in the amount of air time given to Bing and we thank her for such a varied selection of solos and duets plucked from those halcyon years of musical talent. If you really are interested in keeping Bing's name to the fore then please get in touch with her or any of the presenters mentioned here or of whom you know in your area. Most of you readers of this magazine are retired so 'no time' is not an excuse! Oh, and by the way, Anne sent us this little message.

Best wishes to all in the Club Crosby for Christmas and the New Year.

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria's Barrow Studios: Broadcasting House, Hartington St., Barrow-in Furness, Cumbria LA14 5SL, email: anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk Telephone: 01229 835 252

ALL THE LOWE DOWN

"Moonlight Becomes You" from Bing Crosby, 'who else?' said David Lowe on his BBC Radio Bristol programme. He operates a strict six month embargo on songs so that, for example, there's no point his listeners asking for that one or "True Love" yet again until April - just about the time this issue will be dropping on your doormat. Still, David has a lot of Crosby to choose from and his requests are always catered for one way or the other. Heard since last time around are some two dozen tracks ranging from the 1930 "Them There Eyes" to the radio resurrection of "Old Cape Cod" courtesy of Ken Barnes and Pete Moore. In a Gus Kahn birthday tribute Bing was featured with "Memories" and 'in the hooray for the Irish department' came Bing's Philco rendition of "How Are Things In Glocca Morra?" A couple celebrating their wedding anniversary asked for 'anything of your choice but preferably Bing'; but hang on a minute the happy couple tied the knot way back in 1932 just when Bing had recorded "I've Got The World On A String". 76 years married beats even the similar event reported in the last issue here. They certainly live to a ripe old age down there in the West Country! David used Bing extensively for a birthday tribute to both Hoagy Carmichael and James V. Monaco; so "Old Buttermilk Sky", "Stardust", "Only Forever" and "Too Romantic" were among the obvious choices. "So Rare" might be considered a comment on the inclusion of the Kennedy-Bratton children's song "Teddy Bears' Picnic" and Irving Berlin's "All Of My Life" is not a track one hears that often either. In view of the recent U.K. weather scene "A Fella With An Umbrella" was most appropriate - personally, I'm looking forward to "In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening" but maybe that's just "A Pocketful Of Dreams"! Thank you David for these and many other Bing spins.

Recently, Russell Davies played half of all Bing's recorded output for 1948 in one afternoon programme. Wow! Sounds too good to be true until one looks up 1948 and discovers that because of James Caesar Petrillo, the labour leader of the American Federation of Musicians, who called a strike, Bing recorded just two songs. No wonder "Far Away Places" became one of his top forty hits. The recording does feature some rhythm accompaniment, which may have escaped Mr. Petrillo's attention, but, also, Bing was ably backed by the Ken Darby Choir. Later Russell was to lament that Rudyard Kipling fails to get any composer credit for "The Whiffenpoof Song" attributed to Meade – Minnigerode – Pomeroy which they introduced to the public in 1909 using Kipling's poem as the foundation. I wonder if any of their descendants received any royalties for yet another big selling top ten track from Bing with Fred Waring's Glee Club in 1947?

Poor old 'Sugar-Throat' Burns, just when he was about to woo the Philco audience ladies with the Rodgers & Hammerstein hit from *State Fair*, "It Might

As Well Be Spring", Bing and The Rhythmaires fractured his affair. So what that we've heard it all before; it always remains amusing, so well done to Russell for serving up this little treat for his listeners!

THE WHIFFENPOOF SONG
(BAA-BAA-BAA !)
By MEADE MINNIGERODE, GEORGE S. POMEROY AND TOD B. GALLOWAY
Sung by
BING CROSBY
on Brunswick 03902
LONDON: FRANCIS, DAY & HUNTER, Ltd.
129-140, CHARING CROSS RD. W.C.2.
NEW YORK: MILLER MUSIC CORPORATION,
1270, 6th AVENUE
Authorised for sale only in The British Empire
(excepting Canada, Australia & New Zealand)
1/- NET

David Jacobs played a very nice orchestral version of "Please" introducing it by saying it was a melody that Bing made all his own and which invoked memories of his parents' wind-up gramophone: memories that Bing Crosby had a lot to do with. Pity, then, he doesn't play some Crosby records. Okay, so he did feature "That Face" from a television programme but it's no good waxing lyrical about someone on the strength of one track.

THE WHITE STUFF

Snow; here in the U.K. we've experienced the heaviest snowfalls for twenty years. Small beer by the regular winters of our Canadian cousins and many parts of the USA. But not in Vermont back in 1953 if the Paramount back lot of a famous film was anything to go by - at least not to start with. "Snow", as sung by Bing, Danny Kaye, Peggy Lee and Trudy Stevens was one of the seasonal songs played by Paul Barnes in his December calendar selection; a regular feature of Paul's programme of popular, jazz influenced music. A visit to Frank Sinatra's VIM sponsored radio show gave us Bing and Frank's parodied duet of contemporary tunes where they spar and spark off each other, and Frank's parody of "Sunday, Monday Or Always" re-titled "Dick Todd, Dick Haymes And Como" ["there's just one Crosby"] is a firm favourite among the parodied nods to the talent of Mr. Crosby. "We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines" was the selected January calendar; an absolute gem of a musical sequence showcasing Bing and Marion Davies in the film *Going Hollywood* and tunefully performed on record by him with the Lennie Hayton Orchestra. Still garbed in his Barbour jacket, and as a tribute to Maxine Andrews who would have ninety years old on that day, Paul cued up Cole Porter's "Don't Fence Me In" whereon Bing and her famous sisters extol the virtues of the great outdoors, and if that wasn't enough fresh air Rodgers & Hart's "Mountain Greenery", from the 1926 Broadway show *Garrick Gaieties*, also had a spin: Bing with the Buddy Bregman Orchestra version, of course.

The February calendar song "That Sly Old Gentleman", a 'charming lullaby' thought Paul, preceded the s/t version of "Hang Your Heart On A Hickory Limb" on which Bing can be heard with Mrs. Kelly's Singing Cooks. Paul found that an amusing group name but he might like to know that much of the vocal accompaniment on that version comes from the 'singing waitresses' more familiar to us as The Music Maids. A little classroom corruption followed with "An Apple For The Teacher". 'Delicious' was the verdict of the rendition of that Monaco-Burke composition written for the biographic movie *The Star Maker*. So, don't forget if you can tune in live or 'listen again' Gold For Grown Ups is 22 carat entertainment.

Paul Barnes, BBC The Forum, Millennium Plains, Norwich NR2 1BH

Saturdays, 18.00 [Essex 19.00] until 21.00 (BST) on world wide web: www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk or tune in to

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ABSENTEE

Where's our Angela? Missing for some time is Bill Rennells' missus who usually partners him on their BBC Thames Valley Harmony Night. A huge fan of Bing mayhap she'll be returning ere long so in the meantime we have to thank Bill for the many Crosby requests that have been heard continuously over his BBC Radio Kent-Berks-Oxford area for three hours each Sunday night from 10 p.m. Their address is Bill & Angela Rennells, PO Box 95.2, Oxford 082 7YL or if you have the facility email bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk Your favourite track *will* be played with dedications if desired. Those of us who requested "I Found A Million Dollar Baby In A Five And Ten Cent Store", "Brother Can You Spare A Dime", and "Let's Start The New Year Right", [and several other songs] all of which may be related to the present tough times, were rewarded by just quickly putting pen to paper or emailing. It gives one a good feeling to hear Bing's name and the subsequent song tied in with a personal dedication. Have *you* enjoyed that personal satisfaction recently? Thank you, Bill for the opportunity.

Bert Bishop, 20th February, 2009

(Editor: Thanks, Bert. On Christmas Day, the web site for the New York Daily News gave us a pleasant surprise in the shape of an article by David Hinckley which we now share with you. This follows on nicely from Bert's review of the Sirius XM broadcasts.)

Don't mean a thing if it ain't got that Bing

One of the treats of the holiday season on the radio this year has been Sirius XM satellite's 12-day run of vintage Bing Crosby Christmas radio shows.

The shows, which cover about 15 years of broadcasts and finish up on Sirius XM today, are good-natured and relaxed, fitting perfectly with Crosby's image.

They feature A-list guests and loads of good Crosby music, including multiple renditions of "White Christmas," "Adeste Fideles," "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bells." More than that, they evoke a whole era, or more accurately, several eras, from World War II into the late 1950s.

The Kraft ads in a 1944 broadcast talk about how few ration coupons Kraft cheese spreads will require. Then Crosby sings, "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Town of Berlin (When the Yanks Come Marching In)."

Postwar commercials for Philco, which sponsored Crosby from 1946 to 1949, boast how Philco developed radar systems that helped win the war and is now applying those same technologies to build better radios.

Ads for Chesterfield cigarettes promote holiday gift cartons as the ideal Christmas present for all your friends, with Crosby and announcer Ken Carpenter joking that this is what they will be giving each other.

While Crosby wasn't known for political activism, he does a long monologue in an early-'50s show on Iron Curtain countries, and how dark Christmas must be in lands with no freedom.

On the apolitical side, he talks about the value of reading. He plugs Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea" and an historical study on the famous Charge of the Light Brigade. He waxes at length on a just-published anthology of Grantland Rice's work, adding that he knew "Granny" well and, "We just might have raised a couple of toddies."

Best of all are the guests. Judy Garland, between songs, joins Crosby for a sketch where they play a couple of ne'er-do-well songwriters. Al Jolson and Crosby team up to sing "Sunbonnet Sue."

Jimmy Durante's here, and Orson Welles, and Bob Hope, of course, and Hopalong Cassidy, who explains to Crosby why in his pictures he never gets the girl. (At the end of a long day, it seems, he's just too tired.)

Edgar Bergen stops in and plays a sketch where his 9-year-old daughter Candy recites "The Night Before Christmas."

Running these shows is what satellite has room to do - and it's cool that, in some ways, 60-year-old programs have been the freshest thing on radio this month.

David Hinckley

The Elko Connection

Here's Martin McQuade with news of another radio programme heard since our last issue

Weekend Edition of National Public Radio featured on December 5th, 2008 an outstanding profile of the cultural history of Elko, Nevada. Produced by The Western Folklife Media Center in Utah and narrated by Hal Cannon, the segment traced the town's Depression era roots. We learn that once gambling became legalized in Nevada in 1931 the threadbare community was transformed by visionary impresarios like Newt Crumley of The Commercial Hotel into a center of glittering casino nightlife, a precursor of Las Vegas, some four hundred miles to the south. James Stewart was one of the prominent 5000 residents of Elko, as was Bing Crosby, who owned seven ranches here.

Gene Peterson remembered one hot summer afternoon seeing a man and a boy ambling down the road of his family ranch. He asked himself, *who in the devil is this out here this time of day? He had a flat tire on this old Ford truck down there about a quarter of a mile from the ranch house. I didn't really recognize him, to be honest with you. I went and helped him, got his tire changed, got him going. It was Bing and one of his boys. Lord of Mercy! I didn't know. I was just a kid!*

His niece Carolyn Schneider recalls, *Uncle Bing was a working cattle rancher. He didn't just sit back in the office and give orders. He was out there in his chaps and boots doing the whole thing, helping to mend fence or brand cattle, whatever needed to be done. People would see him on the street and say, "Hi, Bing." It was just very casual. They didn't make a fuss over him. Bing himself is quoted as saying "I love these folks."* This is reflected in a comment made by Mr. Cannon that the townsfolk *loved sitting near him at the local Catholic mass just to hear him croon the hymns.* He also comments that Crosby hoped the cowboy work ethic would rub off on his sons.

The report is punctuated by strains of Crosby's paean to Elko, sung to the tune of *Civilization. Well we moved to Elko County about a dozen years ago. We bought a ranch down by the river when the river was nice and low.* Newt Crumley was his hunting buddy. *I'll be singing Sweet Leilani while Newt's sittin' on his fanny counting up my dough.* In 1948 he was named honorary mayor. *As long as I'm the mayor I like this place. Elko Nevada I'll stay right here.*

The inclusion of an excerpt from a contemporary broadcast conducted in the lounge of The Commercial Hotel lends authenticity to a fascinating profile of this cherished oasis on the range. *I'm deeply flattered of course that the good people of Elko think that much of me that they want to place the reins of the city government in my hands if it's only in an honorary capacity. I don't anticipate any work. I just want to sit around and take a few bows.*

Martin McQuade

A Meeting With Tiny Tim

Bill Piccone sent us an article from the September 1969 issue of *Hobbies* magazine "The magazine for Collectors". The article "A Meeting With Tiny Tim" by Jim Walsh contains the following

mention of Tim working with Bing on the Hollywood Palace.

Tim soon had me laughing with his account of making a filmed television appearance with Bing Crosby, whom he admires greatly.

"Mr. Crosby," Tim said, "had two strong opinions. He didn't like men with long hair, so he was prejudiced against me to begin with, and he didn't like to work with people who had colds, for fear of taking the colds home to his children.

"Naturally, it had to happen that I began taking a cold for a few days before the show was to be filmed." Tim said, "I tried desperately to shake it off, and called up a specialist (they do everything by phone in California) and asked him for something to make me snap out of it. But it didn't work. The cold kept getting worse."

I have forgotten whether the performance had to be postponed because of Tim's cold, or whether he rallied his forces sufficiently to be able to appear on schedule, but I do remember his mentioning "the funny way Mr. Crosby looked at me and my long hair, and after I had sung my first number he yelled: 'Give this guy a box of Snickers!'"

Nobody, Tim went on, seemed to understand what that cryptic exclamation meant, but after he had sung a second number Crosby exclaimed: "Give this guy another box of Snickers!'"

"But," Tim said brightly, "it ended fine. After the filming Mr. Crosby put his hand on my shoulder and told me I was alright and had done a good job. It made me very happy, to receive praise from such a great artist."

This, incidentally, is more evidence that persons who begin by being prejudiced against Tiny Tim and by calling him "a long haired weirdo," discover, after getting to know him, that they like him very much, indeed.

Jim Walsh

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Beverly Garland, whose long and varied acting career ranged from B-movie cult stardom in the 1950s portraying gutsy characters in movies such as *Not of This Earth* and *It Conquered the World* to playing Bing's wife on the Bing Crosby Show sitcom of the 60s, died on December 5 at her Hollywood Hills home after a long illness. She was 82.

She was born Beverly Fessenden, on Oct. 17, 1926, in Santa Cruz and grew up in Glendale, where she studied acting in high school and began working in little theater, which she continued after the family moved to Phoenix.

She became Beverly Garland when she married actor Richard Garland; they were divorced in 1953 after less than four years. An earlier, brief marriage to Bob Campbell when she was 18 also ended in divorce. In 1960, she married real estate developer Fillmore Crank, a widower with two children, Cathleen and Fillmore Jr. They had two more children, Carrington Goodman and James Crank. In 1972, the couple built their mission-style hotel in North Hollywood, now called Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn, which she remained involved in running. They also built a hotel in Sacramento that bore Garland's name in the '80s but later sold it. Her husband died in 1999. Garland is survived by four children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Despite her reputation for doing heavy drama—including being nominated for an Emmy in 1955 for her performance as a leukemia patient in the pilot of the medical drama "Medic"—Garland was best known to many for her comedy turn in "My Three Sons." She played the second wife of MacMurray's character, widower Steve Douglas, during the last three seasons of the popular series, which aired from 1960 to 1972.

Garland also played her fair share of mothers in TV series. She was Stephanie Zimbalist's in "Remington Steele" and Kate Jackson's in "Scarecrow and Mrs. King" in the 1980s, and Teri Hatcher's in "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman" in the '90s.

Beverley Garland with her on-screen husband in the 1964-65 sitcom series

Early in her career, Garland played undercover New York police officer Casey Jones in the 1957-59 syndicated series "Decoy," said to be the first American TV police series built around a female protagonist. Garland's big-screen credits included roles in films such as *The Joker Is Wild* (1957), *Pretty Poison* (1968), *Where the Red Fern Grows* (1974) and *Airport 1975* (1974). But her starring roles in low-budget exploitation films in the '50s such as *The Alligator People* gave her an enduring cult status.

Crosby fans will always have warm memories of the endearing way she played Bing's wife in his 1964-65 sitcom series.

Olga San Juan, the actress dubbed the "Puerto Rican Pepper Pot" died on January 3 of kidney failure stemming from a long-term illness. She was 81. Of Puerto Rican descent, Olga was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She started dancing when she was 5 or 6 years old and performed as a girl with mambo percussionist Tito Puente. She began her acting career in radio and theater, then went on to movies in the mid-1940s.

"Those were the days where the studios were very active in building images. She was very tiny, but very spunky and lively. So the name Puerto Rican Pepper Pot fit," her son-in-law Barry Adelman, executive producer of the Golden Globe Awards, said. She appeared in three films with Bing: *Blue Skies*, *Duffy's Tavern* and *Variety Girl*. Her other films included *One Touch of Venus, The Countess of Monte Cristo* (both 1948) and *The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend* (1949). In 1951 she starred in the Broadway production of Lerner and Loewe's *Paint Your Wagon*.

Olga San Juan sings "Cuba" with Bing in *Blue Skies*.

San Juan was the ex-wife of the late actor Edmond O'Brien. They met at a publicity luncheon for Fox studios and married in 1948. The pair had three children. Olga retired in the 1950s to raise her children. The couple divorced in 1976. O'Brien died in 1985.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord's regular look at some of the many celebrities he has interviewed over the years who had a connection with Bing.

A Legendary Troubadour

Perry Como's exceptional baritone voice and his easy-going manner captivated audiences for over fifty years. His singing was as soothing as a gentle breeze. He was one of the most likeable and appealing entertainers of the 20th century.

His death in 2001 was mourned the world over. On his 89th birthday, May 12, he died in his sleep following a lengthy illness. In one of his last public appearance, he remarked wistfully, "Where did the years go? Time goes by so quickly. Sometimes everything seems so fleeting."

When Perry Como records began to resonate with the public in the 1940's they were occasionally mistaken as being new Crosby releases. In his formative years he was captivated by the voice and style of the "first Mr. C" and greatly influenced by Bing's effortless vocalizing and incomparable phrasing.

During one of my conversations with the Oscar winning composer, Jimmy Van Heusen, he made an interesting observation about Perry and Bing in those early years: "There were times when you could hardly tell them apart. Como wanted to emulate Crosby and often did."

Although they were often considered rivals by their respective fans, the two legendary singers held one another in the highest regard. Their memorable duets on their television shows are treasured videos. In one of our interviews Perry recalled a special TV musical moment: "Bing did something with his voice that was so impressive that I said, 'that's the sound I have tried to duplicate for years'. My comment, I do believe, embarrassed him, but I meant it sincerely."

When I told Bing what Perry's reaction was to that incident, he replied modestly: "Oh he's crazy—too kind. He has his own style and manner. He phrases beautifully and is a great singer."

With the exception of Bing, no one was more closely associated with the Christmas season than Perry. There was an annual Como yuletide special for 30 years, which originated from various locations around the globe. However, by the mid-1980s he had become unhappy with the network scheduling of his shows and decided not to renew his contract. "I enjoyed doing them very much," he told me, "they were always well received." But he felt that the effort and money required to produce a large scale TV special, deserved a better time slot than he was getting.

Born Pierino Ronald Como in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, he was the son of Italian immigrant parents, and seemed destined to be a barber. His apprenticeship began when he was only ten years old. By the time he was a teenager he was making a living by day practicing the tonsorial art and singing at night with local bands.

During the summer of 1933, while on vacation, he won a full time job with the Freddy Carlone Band. It was the same year that he married his childhood sweetheart, Roselle. They met at a church picnic when they were only 16. Appropriately, their song was the

lovely old ballad, 'When You Were Sweet Sixteen'.

In 1936 Perry joined the Ted Weems orchestra and remained with them until 1942. Unhappy with the constant touring of the band, which took him away from his family, he embarked on a solo career. His inspiration then and through the years was Bing.

"There was no one else but Bing," he reminded me, "if you didn't sound a little like Bing, or sing like Bing, it was very difficult to get a job with an orchestra. That was the sound you listened to and it was the accepted sound. So I had my collection of Crosby records and I would listen to them as often as I could and then try to get as close to him as I could, and at times I did fairly well."

In 1943 after successful radio appearances, he was signed to a recording contract by RCA Victor. His first release, 'Goodbye Sue', sold well, but his next disk, an adaptation of *Chopin's Polonaise*, which was re-titled 'Till the End of Time', was a million-seller and made him a household name.

"That was the first of 15 gold records," he told me, " and the one that kept me out of the barber business for a while." It was followed by golden revivals of Bing's hit, 'Temptation' and Russ Columbo's theme, 'Prisoner of Love'.

The Como chain of unbroken hits over the next fifteen years included 'Catch a Falling Star', 'Round and Round', 'Wanted' and 'Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes'. In the early 1970s he staged an impressive return to the hit charts with two lovely ballads, 'And I Love You So' and 'It's Impossible'.

A young Gord Atkinson interviews Perry in Ottawa in 1966.

"I was always relaxed when I sang," he often said, "mainly because I'm not high-strung or animated by nature." The image of him wearing a cashmere sweater, sitting on a stool and singing a medley of favourite old songs is locked in time. But he once confessed that he was uncomfortable wearing those sweaters. "I'd go crazy when I put them on. They were itchy. I finally got rid of all of them."

The Como TV years ran from 1948 to the 1980's. During that time the format of his show expanded from a 15 minute songfest to an hour-long award-winning musical-comedy review.

In 1987 he was one of the recipients of a presidential lifetime achievement award at the annual Kennedy Center honours in Washington, DC.

On the Atlantic coast of South Florida, he and his wife, Roselle, found their "blue heaven" in the idyllic community of Jupiter, where they lived for over 30 years. Occasionally he would venture out from his relaxed lifestyle for a fund-raising event. He was always greeted with a standing ovation. "You scared me half to death," he would tell his audiences when they rose from their seats. "I thought maybe you were leaving the theatre."

An avid golfer and fisherman, he thoroughly enjoyed his life and surroundings in Florida, where his three children, Ronnie, David and Terri, and their families would often visit. In August 1998, only two weeks after he and his wife celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary, Mrs. Como passed away.

Perry Como was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and a friend to people from all walks of life. A genuinely unassuming man, he led an exemplary life both on and off the stage.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Excerpts from Gord's Perry Como interviews are included on his Crosby Years CDs, Parts 1, 2, 3 & 4.

Gord's look at Perry Como is opportune as the book written by Ken Crossland and your Editor is being advertised by McFarland & Co (see www.mcfarlandpub.com/) as being available Spring/Summer 2009 at a price of $55. The title is 'Perry Como - A Biography and Complete Career Record'. The book can also be found on the Amazon and the Barnes & Noble web sites. We are looking into the possibility of making a bulk purchase for ICC members in the UK.)

BING CROSBY'S RAREST RECORDS

John Newton offers his thoughts on Bing's rarest discs.

Record collector friends, knowing my affinity for Bing Crosby records, have occasionally asked "What is the rarest Bing Crosby record?" In answering, I always make it a point to qualify the answer, drawing a distinct line between Bing's commercially issued records and non-commercial records, i.e. records that were produced for various reasons but were never available to the public and were not intended to reach the hands of the public in general.

Rarity, of course, is relative and comes in varying degrees. Even the rarest of Bing's commercially issued records hold places of honor within a number of Crosby collections. And, while it's still very difficult to have original issues of all of Bing's commercially issued recordings, there are collections that claim such. Such commercially issued rarities will be discussed in a future article, so for the purposes of this missive I will restrict the following to Bing's *non*-commercial records.

Even non-commercial records can be broken down into several separate categories. The records made at or for movie studios generally fall into three separate groupings: (1) Production discs that were produced for internal studio use; (2) Promotional or Exploitation Records that were produced to advertise forthcoming films via radio or in theater lobbies; and (3) Synchronous sound-track discs, used by theater exhibitors to provide the sound for some of the earlier films (e.g. "King Of Jazz", etc.)

Another separate group of non-commercial records includes the records and transcriptions that were made for war-time activities or to aid various charities or public services. Another grouping includes "air-checks", recordings made from live broadcasts. Such air-checks were often made in professional recordings studios for the artists on radio programs or for composers whose work appeared on radio programs, or even for the advertising agencies and sponsors of programs.

Still another group includes private or personal records such as "blow-ups" or rejected recording "takes" or recordings that were made for friends, relatives, acquaintances or co-workers.

Most of the records that I will list amongst Bing's "rarest" will come from this category since I have arbitrarily decided to focus on a list of the ten rarest, in my opinion. Using all categories, this list could easily have been expanded to fifteen or twenty, but space constraints must be considered.

If readers would like to see and hear of more, this listing can be expanded in future issues.

The fact that such records were made privately, for personal or even business reasons, instantly puts them into a class by themselves. Over the years most of these non-commercial recordings have ultimately become available to Bing's fans and collectors in one form or another, either as "bootlegged" 78rpm dubbings or, later, copies of copies were dubbed onto long-play records or CDs.

So, while the content of many of these recordings may be familiar to Bing collectors, the original source records are not.

Many of Bing's non-commercial records may be somewhat common to collectors. A number of Crosby movie advertising records or movie promotional recordings that appeared as "Paramount Radio Recording" pressings from the mid-to-late 1940's are relatively easy to obtain since Paramount's publicity department during this period had hundreds of copies produced and distributed to theater managers and radio stations. Conversely, some of the original movie studio records that were made for the studios' internal use are quite scarce, even very rare in many cases, since these were never intended to leave the studios or the production departments where they were used.

Other types include test pressings of un-released or rejected "takes" of commercial recordings, sometimes including "blow-ups" or "fluffs" made during a recording session. Probably the most common of Bing's rejected "takes" is his 1939 blow-up of "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams".

Beyond the original Decca company pressings, this recording was dubbed and reproduced on numerous pressings from the 1940's onward. Often backed by another blow-up, this title made its way into countless homes via plain labeled dubbed pressings of acetate copies. But, original master pressings of this title are still fairly scarce, even though the boys at Decca seem to have made a number of master test pressings of this particular title. Only those with masters of DLA 1767-C or DLA 1767-CC or XXX are original master pressings. All others are dubs or later generation copies.

Again, getting back to Bing's rarest records, while the sounds or content or many of these rarities are familiar to collectors, how many collections contain original pressings of these records and how many collectors have even seen any of these original records? In some cases only very tiny numbers were made, originally ranging from ten copies or less. And, with far fewer originals surviving some may probably now be unique. Those known probably exist today because they were once part of the collections of company executives, company workers or the artists themselves. Many years ago, in a conversation with Bing about his earlier recordings, he stated that he once had a lot of this material but much (but not all) had been lost or damaged in the fire that occurred at his Toluca Lake home in 1943.

Following, in chronological order, is my estimation of the rarest Bing Crosby records. I should note here that only one "test pressing" is listed, even though there are other tests where only a single copy is currently known to exist. And, again to repeat, of necessity this list needed to be limited to a manageable number. If readers should wish to expand this list, please advise our editor and I will comply in a future issue.

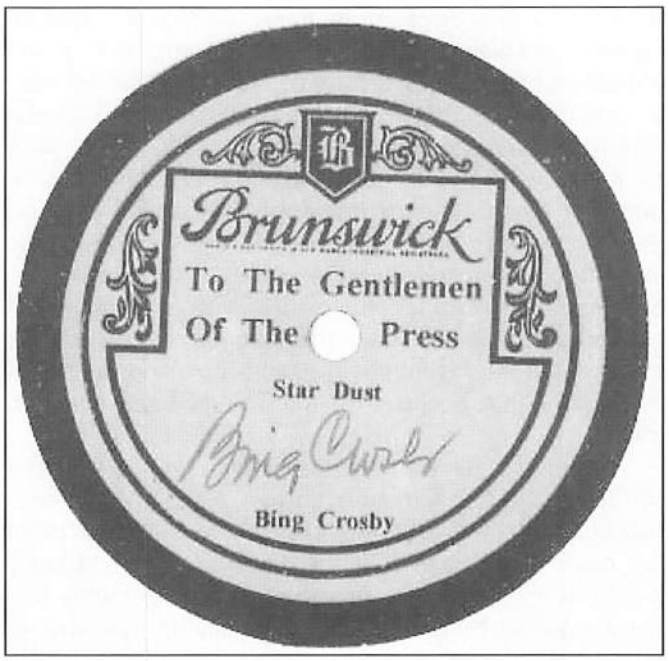
1. "SOUTHERN MELODIES" - Columbia Personal Record

This personal Columbia record was contracted and recorded by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra (with Bing Crosby providing solo vocals on one side) for a friend of Mr. Whiteman. Only 10 copies were pressed and the records are 12-inch with plain white labels. At least three copies survive in collections. One such copy had been purchased in a second-hand shop for 50 cents. The buyer knew by appearance and matrix numbers that it was a Columbia personal record, but had no idea of the content until he brought it home and played the record. What a find!

It may be interesting to note that the major record companies of the day, Victor, Columbia and Brunswick, would make private or personal recordings for virtually anyone - for a fee. Such fees were relatively reasonable, yet still rather expensive for the average person whose weekly wages would not cover the cost.

2. BRUNSWICK Presentation Record - un-numbered - To The Gentlemen Of The Press
The 1931 Brunswick recordings of "Star Dust" and "Dancing In The Dark" are well known to Crosby admirers. Jack Kapp must have sensed their quality and appeal before the record was released when he authorized specially labeled copies of the record to be produced for a special occasion.

According to Doctor Anthony Simeone, a Philadelphia physician and an early collector and acquaintance of Bing in the 1930's, there were 25 copies of this record specially prepared as presentation copies. These special copies were given to invited attendees and members of the press covering Bing's first broadcast as a solo artist. The labels on this special Brunswick are a distinct bright red with black printing and "To The Gentlemen Of The Press" printed on the labels above the titles. Each label was personally signed by Bing for the occasion, giving those present a personal souvenir.



3. "BILL WILLIAMS" Brunswick - un-numbered - "After Sundown" / "Beautiful Girl"
There are actually two different stories explaining how this record came to exist, a Bing Crosby Brunswick record labeled with the name of Bing's character in his film "Going Hollywood".

One version, detailed in Fred Reynolds' fine work, "The Crosby Collection" (Part 1, pages 179-181), states that the record was produced by recording engineers as a joke on Jack Kapp, with Kapp being told that "Bill Williams" was a new singing discovery.

The other version is that Jack Kapp himself had the record pressed with a special label identifying the artist as "Bill Williams" - and Kapp presented the record to Bing as a practical joke. My personal opinion is that the latter version is probably more accurate and, in retrospect, makes more sense. Jack Kapp was extensively familiar with Bing's voice and singing. Who in the entertainment industry didn't know that voice by late 1933? As Brunswick's top vocal artist, Bing's career activities were followed very closely by Mr. Kapp. He would certainly have known the selections that Bing recorded from his forthcoming film as well as the name of Bing's character in the film. Whatever the genesis, and whether the record was presented to Jack Kapp or to Bing himself, this record is a unique curio among Bing's records.

4. "ROLLICKING ROCKAWAY RAOUL" M-G-M - Freeman Lang - un-numbered.
The content of this recording, made at, or more probably, for the *Going Hollywood* cast party held at Marion Davies' beach house in Santa Monica, California, is well known to Crosby fans and collectors.

While the content of the record has been widely circulated for decades, an original pressing is exceedingly rare. The record is 10-inch and single-sided, with a large white label M-G-M label with the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer logo. The label is approximately 6 inches across, covering more than half the surface of the record (!) and also states "recorded in the studios of Freeman Lang, Hollywood, Calif." There is no printed title or content, although "MGM Party" is handwritten in pencil on the label.

Significantly, this record was originally given to Jack Kapp by Bing and has an short inscription on the label from Bing. At least two later pressings also exist, both of which were dubbed and copied at Jack Kapp's Decca company. The first of the two dubbings was made in 1935 and bears the matrix TNY-255 (TNY = Test New York), the reverse of which contains Bing's recorded studio argument with Jack Kapp, listed next in this article. Another later dubbing was made in 1946, bearing matrix number TNY-1286. This later dubbing is also two-sided, the reverse containing a dubbing of yet another earlier recording, "Jimmy Valentine" now with matrix TNY-1287.

5. DECCA STUDIO ARGUMENT - Bing and Jack Kapp - TNY-3593
This record contains another recording whose content is well known to Bing collectors, although original pressings are almost non-existent. The recording was made at Jack Kapp's instruction (Kapp at one point is

heard asking a recording engineer, "Are you getting this down?") and Bing is heard in what Kapp terms "such an arbitrary mood". Bing held a business grudge against a music publishing executive named Diamond, whose firm handled the song he was to record.

It's also somewhat apparent that Bing might have had a bit too much to drink during breaks between selections at this recording session with the Dorsey Bros. orchestra (the voice of at least one of the Dorseys is heard in the background). Due to obvious reasons of content, this recording was not circulated until it appeared on a private LP issue in the 1950's. The original Decca private pressings, made in late August 1935, exist in two forms: a one-sided pressing and a two-sided pressing backed with a dubbing of "Rollicking Rockaway Raoul", both with plain white labels. The one-sided pressing has only two words handwritten on the label, "Bing drunk".

6. DECCA 2nd ANNIVERSARY - Greetings to Edward Lewis - DLA-429

Edward ("Ted") Lewis headed the British Decca company, and it was with his backing and financial support that Jack Kapp and others formed the Decca Record Company in America during the Summer of 1934. During the afternoon of July 8, 1936, at the behest of Mr. Kapp, Bing Crosby, along with Jimmy Dorsey, film actress Elizabeth Allen and several others made a rather spontaneous recording to be sent to Mr. Lewis. This recorded greeting was made to commemorate the second anniversary of the founding of American Decca.

Bing acts as spokesman, introducing those present. Jimmy Dorsey performs a clarinet solo, accompanied by Bobby Van Eps on piano, while the others simply speak their greetings. Bing closes the recording after a half-hearted attempt at singing "Take My Heart". The record is a one-sided 10-inch pressing with a white Decca "sunburst"-style label.

The matrix/take for this record is usually listed in discographies as DLA-429-A, but there are no numbers pressed in the shellac and only DLA-429 is hand-written on the label.

7. CAROLE LOMBARD PARTY RECORDS - Home Recordings

Stories abound of entertainment celebrities "performing" at private social gatherings and parties, particularly in Hollywood and New York. Bing and Dixie Lee Crosby attended such a dinner party on May 29, 1937, and the hostess, film actress Carole Lombard, happened to have a home-recording machine present for the festivities. Among those in attendance, in addition to Bing, Dixie and Miss Lombard, were Clark Gable, Jack Benny, Andy Devine, Zeppo Marx and Walter F. Lang, all of whom are heard, to varying degrees, on the records that were "cut" at the party.

There are a total of eight records, all 8-inch and recorded on both sides at 78 rpm. There are no "labels" but in many cases the names of the performer on each side is hand-written in pencil in the blank area at the center of each side, e.g. "Dixie", "Bing and Carole", and so on. Some fans of Bing may be familiar with one of these recordings, "Ragtime Cowboy Joe", as sung by Bing and Clark Gable. This appeared on an LP years ago, purportedly from a radio performance and in a slightly edited manner with an expletive that appears on the original deleted for the LP release.

Among other things Bing recorded on these records is a solo parody of "Dinah", commenting on Carole's dinner, two separate versions of "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" (one with whistling, one with parody lyrics) and a solo vocal chorus of "Wake Up And Live". Miss Lombard sings "Sweet Leilani" twice, one of which is a duet with Bing (in a key much too high with Bing remarking that he hadn't sung this high since he was a boy!). Messrs. Benny and Devine also sing, and another highlight is a solo vocal of "Sweet Leilani" by Dixie, after which she exclaims that she still thinks the lyrics are wrong. Sadly, much of this material is in poor sound quality, but it is remarkable, nevertheless, that the records have survived at all.

8. "THE GIRL WITH THE PIGTAILS IN HER HAIR" - Jack Kapp Special

This private record was made for Jack Kapp, to celebrate the 7th birthday of his daughter, Myra. The record is a one-sided 10-inch Decca pressing with white label and black printing, giving the title, composers, and Bing's name, below which appears "for Myra Joan Kapp, 7 years old, April 19, 1939".

The song itself is a known title to Crosby collectors as Bing made a somewhat different recording of the song about 10 months after this "special" rendering. This private version is quite charming, with Bing adding a spoken introduction and parody lyrics mentioning "Mama Kapp", "Papa Kapp" and Myra. Additionally, between singing choruses, there is spoken dialogue by Bing and Jack Kapp.

The two known copies have their respective labels printed in different type-face, but this does not indicate another pressing. The typesetter for the labels prepared two different special labels so the boss could decide which looked best for this occasion. The record has no matrix number, in place of which "Jack Kapp Special" appears engraved in the shellac.

DECCA
MANUFACTURED IN U.S.A. - BY DECCA RECORDS, INC.
THE GIRL WITH THE PIGTAILS IN HER HAIR
(Sammy Cahn-Saul Chaplin)
Sung by
BING CROSBY
for Myra Joan Kapp
Seven years old April 19, 1939

9. "WHITE CHRISTMAS" - Decca Test Pressing - DLA-3009-A

Generally and purposefully I have avoided listing test pressings of unissued takes or recordings, from commercial sessions or otherwise, including blow-ups. However, the significance of this particular recording warrants an exception. Relative to numbers extant, other tests could probably qualify (e.g. DLA-8-B, DLA-9-B, DLA-253-B, et cetera), but the almost iconic status of "White Christmas" puts this record in a class by itself. This rejected take was Bing's first attempt at a commercial recording of the song that would become synonymous with Bing for decades. The reason it was rejected was obviously the omission of a single word at the very end of the recording.

The record is a one-sided 12-inch test pressing (oversized test for 10-inch record) with a white Decca label. Written on the label, in addition to some later writing, is the original pencil notation "Use B" (indicating that DLA-3009-B was to be used for release). While this rejected take now appears on CDs, all such releases came from a dubbing made from this single existing record. Decca, now owned by MCA, has no original master, mother, stamper or test in their vaults.

10. BING and BOB CROSBY - Christmas Greetings to their Aunt - TL-191

There are obviously "inside jokes" going on throughout this private recording by the Crosby brothers. Dialogue between the brothers mentions different makes of automobile, a comment referring to a "Mr. Buick", an auto service station, and so on. After some dialogue, Bing sings a parody of "You Forgot Your Gloves" and at the end of the recording says "Merry Christmas, Auntie Mar". The record itself is one-sided with a white Decca label, with later handwriting identifying the content and the year, 1946. Earlier pencil writing simply states "Bing and Bob". In one source, this recording has been dated to December 1940, but this is wrong. The recording was probably made during Bing and Bob's Decca recording session of December 17, 1946.

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As mentioned earlier, this listing could have easily been expanded to fifteen items instead of the arbitrary ten items selected, but consideration for space warranted the limitation. If readers should request additional listings, I will be happy to comply for a future issue. To close, I will, however, list one last rarity of a private recording that is Bing-*related*; not made by Bing, but *for* him.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BING CROSBY - Louis Armstrong - TNY-755

Bing and Louis Armstrong shared mutual admiration and friendship over many years, with their professional relationship beginning with Bing's 1936 film *Pennies From Heaven*. A few years later, obviously giving evidence of Mr. Armstrong's strong personal feelings for Bing, Louis recorded a private birthday greeting to Bing in Decca's New York studios. Armstrong begins the recording stating that this record was for "Papa Bing Crosby", as well as greeting "Madam Bing and all the little Bingies". Armstrong then sings "Happy Birthday" twice, first in a slower rendition then followed by an upbeat rendition. The record is a 10-inch one-sided Decca pressing, with Happy Birthday to Bing written in pencil on the label. Later writing on the label dates it: May 5, 1939. The recording was also dubbed onto a Decca labeled reference acetate from this pressing.

John Newton

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases

***Ken Crossland** looks at the new releases.*

The post-Christmas period is always a quiet one for new releases, even when the world is not in financial turmoil, leave alone these times of recession, depression and credit crunch all round. Perhaps we should all lobby for "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime" to become the anthem of the decade as it was 75 years ago!

That said, there is always something new to interest us, so read on.

COMPACT DISCS

Bing & Satchmo **DRG Records DRG 91515** **USA** **$16.98**

This CD is due for release on March 10 but at the time of writing, there is no confirmation of the track details. The cover is the original MGM LP sleeve from 1960, which suggests that the tracks will be those on the original album, plus we hope, "Lazy River", with its uncredited appearance by Johnny Mercer, which was missing from the original album. Being a "modern" album recorded on tape, is it too much to hope that the session masters might have survived to give us some unreleased gems? Probably so. Nice to see the album back in circulation though.

Jack B. Nimble **Shout Factory** **USA** **$13.98**

1. Once Upon A Time 2. One Early Afternoon 3. Medley: Old King Cole/Sing a Song of Sixpence/Mistress Mary 4. We Don't Know Where We're Going 5. For Want Of A Nail 6. Star Light, Star Bright 7. Jack Be Nimble –

remaining tracks non-Bing

A relative rarity, this is one of several albums of children's stories that Bing recorded in the late Fifties. Shout Factory of course, were behind that marvellous boxed set of Bing on radio a few years back and here's what they say about this release"

"Quintessential crooner Bing Crosby brings life to the classic Mother Goose tale of Jack B. Nimble on this beloved Golden Record recording. Originally recorded in 1958, it features Crosby alternating between spoken narration and the singing of memorable children's songs like "Old King Cole," "Sing A Song Of Sixpence" "Star Light, Star Bright" and more."

Bing With A Swing! **Bygone Days** **UK** **£6.79**

1. The Dixieland Band 2. Jamboree Jones 3. Be Honest With Me 4. Yes Indeed! 5. I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes 6. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 7. You Sang My Love Song To Somebody Else 8. Sweet Lorraine 9. My Baby Said Yes 10. After You've Gone 11. Blue 12. You Gotta Show Me 13. Goodbye, My Lover, Goodbye 14. That's A-Plenty 15. Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella 16. I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter 17. Exactly Like You 18. Dream A Little Dream Of Me 19. Last Night On The Back Porch 20. Some Sunny Day 21. Whispering 22. Tell Me 23. Mack The Knife 24. Mama Loves Papa

Anyone who likes Bing returning to his roots as a jazz singer will want this new UK release. The first 14 tracks echo the "Bing And The Dixieland Bands" LP that appeared on the Decca Ace Of Hearts label in the 60s (although it's not an exact lift – 'You Gotta Show Me' in particular, is a relative rarity), while the final 10 tracks originate from "Bing With A Beat", the 1957 album with Bob Scobey's band.

Two other releases that tread familiar ground are ***Bing Crosby – The Essentials*** – a reissue on the Cleopatra label (USA, $9.98) and a 60-track compilation from Reader's Digest in the UK. *The Essentials* has only 12 tracks with titles such as 'Dancing In The Dark' and 'Stardust'. All ICC members will have these, but if not, then this really is an essential. The Reader's Digest set is titled **Bing Crosby - Stars of the Silver Screen** and retails at £29.99. Titles are familiar and include 'Swinging On A Star', 'White Christmas' etc.

Last time round, I mentioned the **Bing Crosby Collection,** a 10CD set on the Membran label from Germany. At the time, there were no more details to hand but here's what Greg Van Beek has to say about it.

"I picked up a copy of the new German 10-CD box set of Bing containing 250 songs. I purchased it from Caimen, a vendor on Amazon.com at a bargain price of $16.95. It retails for over $50. This is obviously a bootleg release, as the songs from the musical autobiography discs seem to be taken directly from the Avid issue. The songs with the Andrews Sisters also sound as if they were lifted from the 2-CD MCA compilation that Wig compiled in 1996. Other songs are rather poor quality, particularly those on the Dixieland CD. A good portion sound like they were transferred directly from scratchy 78 rpms, "My Heart Is A Hobo" being amongst the worst. So unless a lot of this material is new to you, I would pass on it. There is no booklet or any background on the songs, and the CD's are all housed in thin cardboard sleeves inside a box not much bigger than the case of the 4 CD Avid release of the Musical Autobiography."

Last but not least, look out for the following series of releases on the Record Library label. **The Bing Crosby Show** runs to over 70 volumes, each containing two radio shows. Most are drawn from Philco days but there are other things there too, including some of the Buddy Cole 50s shows. Based on the few samples I have dipped into on the Internet, sound quality is mixed – Philco good, others not so. CDs retail at $9.99 but if you are a North American resident, you can download each show from amazon.com at $0.89 a throw. To find them on Amazon, go to MP3 downloads and search for 'The Bing Crosby Show'. Be warned, the data is hopelessly accurate with many of the shows listed as being from 1954 actually coming from 1947. They probably originate from the MP3 collections of Bing radio shows offered on eBay in the past.

DOWNLOADS

Speaking of downloading music gives a problem as to whether the next items shouldn't really go under the "What's On The Web" section, but as they are commercial music releases, I feel more comfortable with them here. Apple's iTunes store is one of the leading sites for music downloads and they now have several Crosby compilations

available. Bing of course has turned up there before, but I think I am right in saying that previously, all the items were also available on CD. These new collections are download only. Collection titles include "Sweet and Lovely", "Ac-cent-tchu-ate The Positive", "Anything You Can Do" (Bing and Rosie radio tracks") and "You Are My Sunshine". Purchasers can buy the whole selection for around £7.99 ($10 or so) or individual tracks for 79p. The big disappointment though is the iTunes release of **Hey Jude Hey Bing**, Bing's 1968 venture into the world of The Beatles. Never released on CD, the availability of the tracks as digital masters for download seemed great until the samples revealed that all of them run slow. Both Malcolm and I have pointed it out to Apple but with no effect. A chance missed.

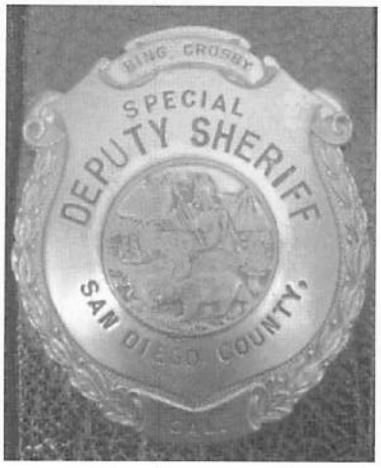
DVD

The DVD box is almost empty this time around with only a couple of releases worthy of a passing mention. **"The Road To Hollywood"** was released in the USA last December, but this of course is not one of the "Road" series but a 1947 compilation that features clips from Bing in his Mack Sennett days. An authentic Road picture that does get another release is the 1952 trip to Bali that Synergy Entertainment released in the States in January but it has of course seen many previous DVD outings. In the UK, a **Grace Kelly Collection** is released by Paramount Entertainment and includes **The Country Girl**, which is relatively scarce in PAL format.

What's On The Web?

Pressures on space meant that my round-up of the Crosby Internet traffic lost its place last time, so this time around, I have a double helping.

As ever, the Internet auction site, eBay, continues to offer a range of Crosbyana. Much of it is routine stuff – CDs, LPs, bit of memorabilia, but every once in a while, something unusual pops up. Just before Christmas, it was a bound set of copies of scripts for 286 Ford Road Shows, running from September 2, 1957 to August 31, 1958. These of course were the five-minute shows that Bing hosted along with Ken Carpenter, featuring a bit of chat, a Ford ad and a song from Bing and Buddy. More recently, unusual Crosby items have included Bing's honorary sheriff badge from San Diego County, vintage 1936-41. A starting price of £1000 failed to attract any bids, but the story behind the badge is interesting. Here's what the seller had to say.



"Back in the early 1950's Bing Crosby used to come up to the Central Coast and visit Elmer Houchin of Shell Beach. Elmer owned "Ranchita" Rancho east of Arroyo Grande. They used to go dove hunting on his ranch. Joe Souza was caretaker of the ranch for some years. Bing was Elmer Houchin's house guest numerous times. On one of the hunting expeditions Bing shot a few doves and stuffed them in the pockets of a suede leather jacket he was wearing. After the hunt Bing noticed that there were a few blood drops on the jacket. He gave the jacket to Joe Souza. Joe Souza gave the jacket to his son-in-law Don Duncan. Don Duncan found this badge in one of the pockets of the jacket. When Bing was contacted about the badge he indicated he no longer wanted it and Don Duncan was allowed to keep it. This occurred sometime in 1952. The badge was acquired from Don Duncan in 1998 by Frank Patti a long time dear friend of Don's. Frank researched this badge and discovered that back in the 1930's Bing Crosby, Jimmy Durante, Bob Hope, and other celebrities helped open the Del Mar Race Track in 1937 in San Diego. These badges were given by Eugene Dort the Sheriff of San Diego County as VIP political gifts. This was essentially a "get out of trouble free" badge. If the owner was pulled over for minor issues flashing this was sure to "get them a pass"."

One site that Internet users should certainly visit is the collection of online discographies, which includes one by Richard Baker covering Bing's commercial and radio output, which was mentioned earlier in this issue. Richard's site is well laid out but its real niche is that it is, as far as I am aware, the only up to date record of all the CD releases of Bing's music and as such, it's invaluable. Have a look at it at http://www.jazzdiscography.com/

It is an amazing testimony to Bing that 106 years after his birth and 30+ years beyond his passing, there is still so much interest in him – new research, music downloads and memorabilia. And here's a nice piece to finish with. Idling away a few minutes lately, I typed into the Google search engine the question "Who Is The Greatest Singer Of All-Time". The first site I came to offered me ten singers, who all had one thing in common: I had never heard of any of them. Next however, I found this entry from one **Michael Russell** of Bibra Lake, Western Australia.

"Anybody can argue about who's the best at any particular occupation. The all time "best" lists are in no way either right or wrong. But they sure are a lot of fun to come up with. People love lists. They love to see what other people think so that they can send in letters and emails arguing with those lists.

Well, according to almost every list ever made, from TV Guide, to Entertainment Weekly, to you name it, the most popular, if not the greatest singer of all time, was Bing Crosby. Crosby had no less than 383 songs in the top 30 during his lifetime, including 41 number one hits. Crosby had a one of a kind voice that simply dominated the music scene from 1931 to 1954. His biggest hit of all time was "White Christmas", which radio stations still play today when Christmas time comes around. Not only was it Crosby's biggest hit but it was the biggest selling single of all time. It was number one on the charts for an amazing 14 weeks. There is no artist that has come even close to Crosby's popularity, not even the man most lists have at number 2.

That would be the great Elvis Presley, who was the most popular singer of the last half of the 20th century. Presley is given credit for almost single handedly starting the rock and roll revolution. His style completely changed the look and feel of popular music. His popularity ran from 1956 to 1981. He had 85 songs in the top 30 and a total of 18 number one hits. His biggest hit of all was "All Shook Up" which was number one on the charts for a solid nine weeks.

Surprisingly, at least as far as popularity goes, no other stars even come close to the popularity of Crosby and Presley. However, there have been other great singers during the 20th century and certainly somebody, even if he or she is far from the front-runners, has to come in at number three. Unfortunately, this is where most lists usually go off in their different directions. Many are split between pre-1950s singers and post-1950s singers and the top 10 in many lists is so varied that it is hard to get a sense of who the majority of the people feel should be in that top 10.

For example, many lists have Al Jolson at number three because of his 91 charted hits and 23 number one hits. But other lists don't even have Jolson listed, probably because he was in an era that has long been forgotten. Certainly Jolson had one of the most unique voices of all time. Some lists have Elton John coming in at the third position because of his 47 top 30 hits and 8 number one hits. Much of John's appeal must be credited to his ties to many other people as well as his tributes to Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana. And yet, there are lists that don't even have Elton John in the top 30.

Much of the problem probably can be attributed to whom you ask. Younger people will lean more towards the post 1950s era while older folks will go for the old time standards. That's why to find Crosby and Presley at the top of most lists is truly a tribute to these two great singers."

Best for now.

ken@kencrossland.co.uk **http://www.kencrossland.co.uk**

GOING HOLLYWOOD - 1933

Our enthusiastic member, Maureen Solomon of Toluca Lake, California, recently gave the following talk to a group of film enthusiasts about Bing's film with Marion Davies.

After Bing Crosby's phenomenal success in his first three features, the last being *Too Much Harmony*, the talented but fading star Marion Davies, handpicked him as her leading man in *Going Hollywood*, a Cosmopolitan-MGM release to be funded by her paramour William Randolph Hearst. Bing definitely came out of this film a bigger star and secured his future at the box-office. Bing used MGM's interest in him to negotiate a new contract with Paramount where he was to stay for 25 years, making 45 of his 62 feature films there.

In late December, 1933 when this picture was released, Bing was busy doing his Woodbury radio show, making hit records, and charity appearances, in addition to having two Mack Sennett comedy shorts showing in theaters. The film started production on September 1, 1933.

Davies was charmed by Bing as was everyone in Hollywood, but Hearst, who bought the story for Marion, was jealous, remembering Bing's past reputation as a womanizing hellraiser, even though Bing's three year long marriage was happy and solid. At that time, Bing was so popular, his singing was heard on all radio broadcasts for almost 80% of every hour. Bette Davis said upon seeing Bing at the Cocoanut Grove, that all of Hollywood seemed to be in love when he sang.

At MGM, Arthur Freed felt that only Bing could put over the song "Temptation", one of six he and Nacio Herb Brown had written for the film. The astute Freed was right, because the song became number one in the nation. Supervising the music score was Lennie Hayton who became a mainstay of the Freed Unit, later working on *Singing In The Rain* and eventually marrying Lena Horne.

Marion was six years older than the 30 year old Bing and needed a premiere cinematographer whom

they found in George Folsey, the cameraman of "The Smiling Lieutenant" at Paramount. Walter Wanger was picked to produce.

A legend at 46, Raoul Walsh was chosen to direct, eagerly accepting the job, wanting to work with its two stars. He had admired Bing as far back as the Cocoanut Grove saying, "he had come a long way with his talent and a big future sticking out all over him."

The wild Walsh, who was later to direct *High Sierra, White Heat* and *The Roaring Twenties*, grew up amongst people such as Buffalo Bill, Diamond Jim Brady, John L. Sullivan and the like, had a yen for the wild side, drinking and brawling. With his black eye patch covering his blind eye, injured in an auto mishap, he was popular yet acerbic, grumbling his pet phrase "Otra Vez", Spanish for "Again". But to Walsh it was like a mantra, meaning everything from "Not now", to "Let's get out of here!"

All the actors were summoned to San Simeon and stayed at the castle for a week rehearsing and socializing with the likes of Winston Churchill who was also a guest. It was there Marion christened Walsh, "Rockaway Raoul" after asking if the Brooklyn born Walsh swam at Rockaway Beach. This nickname was amended by Bing to become "Rollicking Rockaway Raoul." Ned Sparks grumbles at one point in the film, "off to Rockaway Beach for the both of ya, if you don't get it right!"

The film set was rife with pranks and drinking, with competition for the best hijinks. Arthur Freed and Bing wrote lyrics to a song, recorded at the San Simeon wrap party. Bing mimics Walsh to the tune of The Bowery singing - Rollicking Rockaway Raoul! Because of this recording, Bing and Walsh were barred from the MGM lot for life! (We will hear the recording.)

On the MGM lot, Marion had a 14-room bungalow and ever the party thrower, production costs went over $900,000, making the film Marion's most expensive movie to date and a money losing venture, but a hit for Bing.

Marion, who was a stutterer, learned to control her vocal problem when talkies came in. But she had a gift for mimicry and uses it in this film to make fun of rival Lili. I found her speech in the opening scenes very reminiscent of the way Marilyn Monroe spoke in films and wonder if Monroe patterned her speech from Marion the way she copied her platinum blonde hairstyle from Jean Harlow. Marion, not the most graceful of dancers, performs in the prevailing Clog Style tap dancing, sort of like a blonde Ruby Keeler.

Marion didn't come to the set before 11 a.m. Bing would arrive at 9, go to makeup, and then wait two hours for her, something he would never have done later in his career.

Marion would arrive on set accompanied by a 5 piece band that serenaded her between shots. After half an hour they would take a two hour lunch in her bungalow which floored and delighted Bing who was not used to such exotic fare as Bombay Duck, aspic and foie gras .

Fifi Dorsay, Bing's love interest in the film recalled they would all gather for drinks in Marion's dressing room and when the signal came that Hearst was entering the sound stage, a member of the crew enlisted in Marion's conspiracy alerted them and they would dump their glasses, hide the hooch and pretend innocence. And later, there was a tea break at four which might last for another hour or more.

Then there was again makeup - and finally they prepared to shoot around five p.m. "Flushed with the success of our first scene," Bing noted, they were ready to tackle another, but either the crew punched out or Hearst stopped shooting to avoid overtime.

In one scene, "We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines", Bing and Marion had had so much wine during their lunch, they were quite unable to navigate a scene where they had to stroll through a field of giant cellophane daisies that waved back and forth. The unsteady couple found the swaying stanchions so nauseating that they could barely stand. The two made a pact not to look at the daisies. In the completed film, with Marion's gaze focused on his face, Bing sings to the heavens. Bing's voice was at its best in those years, and the beautiful notes he hits are quite astounding.

Bing serenades Marion

There is a remarkable shot in the film of Marion falling in love, listening to Bing over the radio (often called Rah-Dee-Oh). The shot is more than 90 seconds long, unheard of, and was an example of Folsey's glamour photography for the film's aging actress.

Bing dominates the film and really swings the title song, with a bit of spoof on a director's beret. His singing of "Beautiful Girl", our introduction to the star, is particularly well crafted as he handles various complicated bits of business walking around his hotel

room, even with a hangover! When he sings, "I forgot the words," it was Bing at his most unshakable, because I believe he really did, and yet this was kept in. There are other hints of Bing's early comic genius in this film, both verbal and physical, such as a double take at Patsy Kelly's entrance. I believe that the harsh movie schedules, having to be in makeup at 5 or 6 a.m. and the drinking that went on during this film, spurred Bing in real life, to overcome his previous late-night carousing.

When Bing sings "Temptation" in the Mexican bordello, unshaven and derelict from drinking Absinthe, reeling from hallucinations, he's intense and seductive, selling the song with exceptional bravura. Bing later said "It was all very Russian Art Theater."

Absinthe was banned in America at the time. It once had been considered bohemian and critics said it "made people crazy and criminal. Making a ferocious beast of man, a martyr of woman, and a degenerate of the infant." Murders were blamed on Absinthe. Hemingway mentioned it in his novel, calling it "the death in the afternoon cocktail". Also called "the devil in a bottle", and "the green menace", it was widely used by Picasso, Oscar Wilde, Toulouse Lautrec, van Gogh and others. There are many paintings depicting its drinkers and a film was made about it called, *Hasher's Delirium.*

Going Hollywood marked the feature film debut of Patsy Kelly. Stu Erwin was again recruited as a rich nebbish producer, as in *The Big Broadcast*, Clara Blandick (Auntie Em in *Wizard of Oz*) is in the opening scenes at the girl's school. Sterling Holloway is an uncredited radio technician. Curmudgeon Ned Sparks plays his usual grumpy character and costarred with Bing again in *The Star Maker.* Fifi Dorsay, a Canadian who was the prodigy of Will Rogers, was the bad girl competing for Bing's attentions.

During filming, Joan Crawford, who listened constantly to Bing's records in her dressing room, was barred from the set because she would sit and stare at Bing during shooting.

Since this is a film as much about radio as movies, the Three Radio Rogues parody Bing's rivals Russ Columbo, Rudy Vallee, Morton Downey, as well as Kate Smith. It's funny if one remembers Vallee's radio sponsor was Fleischmann's Yeast, a topical reference.

But the emphasis here is on Going Hollywood—Making movies, and as in Bing's 1930 film, *King Of Jazz*, the words used to describe this movie are SUPER, GIGANTIC, and barely COLOSSAL!

There are nice shots of Hollywood premieres at Grauman's Chinese Theater, the Brown Derby, Santa Monica, Hollywood Park and the Cocoanut Grove.

The film opened in late December 1933 competing with *Roman Scandals, Alice In Wonderland* (which Bing had been asked to be in as the White Knight, a part taken by Cary Grant) and *Flying Down To Rio.*

Crosby recalled the making the film and his association with Marion saying "She was warmhearted, with good humor who loved functions and festive occasions more than most. It was probably the last of the halcyon days. Our schedule on the picture stretched out to unbelievable lengths - but it was a real joy working with her."

Marion said "You get some leading men who want to steal the whole scene, but Bing wouldn't do that. He and Gary Cooper were real men. He was a fine man to work with, always in a happy mood and always paid attention to his work."

Something I've noticed about early Bing films—he kisses the girl more times than any other actor I have ever seen. It's unheard of - probably about twenty-five kisses throughout this film and even more in his Sennett shorts. I've never seen that done by any other actor, but I think it's appropriate because as songwriter Jimmy Van Heusen noted, "Bing Crosby was 'the first erotic singer'."

Perhaps it was the Absinthe that made him sink to the depths for the woman he loves because it's prevalent throughout this movie. A drink made in France, from hallucinogenic herbs, it was outlawed for over 50 years. It was legalized only two years ago and we are going to taste some real Absinthe to appreciate what it was like to be Going Hollywood circa 1933....

Maureen Solomon

(Editor: Fascinating! Maureen says that she relied on sources for her notes such as Gary Giddins's, 'Pocketful Of Dreams', two books on Marion Davies, one by her entitled 'The Times We Had', and Bing's own book. She researched the deadly drink by visiting the liquor store, among others! She tells me that her next presentation will cover Bing's film 'Pennies From Heaven'. Incidentally her day job is with the Bob Hope Legacy. What a great way to spend the day!)

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698)

e-mail: gerry@stonestreet13.freeserve.co.uk,

website: www.intuneinternational.com

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £18 for the UK, £22 for Europe and £32.50 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England. (www.memorylane.org.uk

e-mail: editor@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - one of Britain's favourite vocalists. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus picture pages, CD reviews, readers' letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 rpm collectors

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK (Tel: 01594 842991)

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an International Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US$$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US$$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(web site: http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/ - see also http://www.mikescaife.btinternet.co.uk/ for Mike Scaife's Scottish branch website)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743). A bi-monthly magazine called "Perfectly Frank" is issued.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

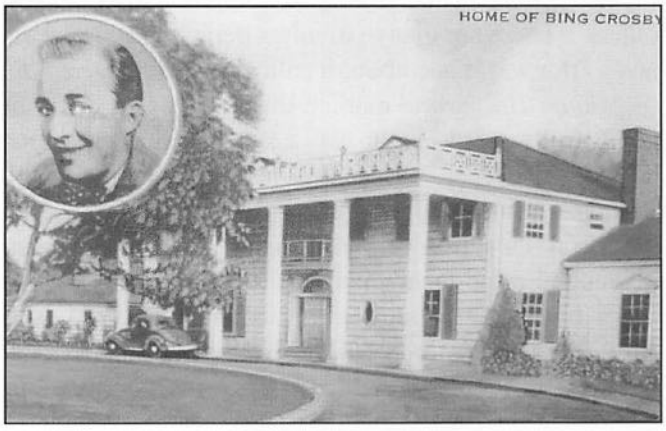
The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and $15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Homes Of The Movie Stars

In this age of cell phones, jet planes and the Internet, film stars can and do live anywhere in the world their wealth can take them. In the mid-20th century, they clung to the warmth of their Hollywood environs. The all-controlling studio system was dying, but not everybody realized that yet.

That was the heyday of tourist trips past the supposed homes of the stars. Buses or vans cruised by. Then there were the maps and the postcard folders.

Bing was prominently featured on the front and back covers of one of those postcard collections - Homes of the Movie Stars. Still being sold in 1951, it featured his Toluca Lake house - although he had by then moved up to Holmby Hills.



When the packet was unfolded, it revealed 12 highly-colored postcards. The stars whose presumed homes were shown? Clark Gable, Deanna Durbin, Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny, Gary Cooper, Walter Pidgeon, Mickey Rooney, Bette Davis, Errol Flynn, Dorothy Lamour and - inside and on the back cover –the same view of Bing's Toluca Lake place. No Crawford, Stewart, Garland or Astaire in that particular package. There was, however, an aerial shot of unidentified beach homes in Santa Monica.

The front cover included thumbnail pictures of Gable, Lamour, Durbin and Crosby. It also offered head shots of Hedy Lamarr, Tyrone Power and Shirley Temple, but their homes didn't make the grade inside.

The Crosby house was among the more prepossessing, although not of the size of the Cantor and Benny estates. But evidently Bing's name on the cover made it easier to sell the packet than any other included name would have. If Bing was just passing his peak as a film star, in the postcard world the Crosby name was still money in the bank.

Bob Achorn

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

March 5, 1959

Mr. Leslie D. Gaylor
16 Pan Lane
Newport
Isle of Wight, Great Britain

Dear Leslie:

My friend, Charlie Graves, in London has sent me your recent letter. I'm very sorry that the discs you desire are not in circulation and not available. I really am not familiar with Decca's method of distribution, so I can't be of much help in advising you about where they could be found.

As far as keeping current on recordings is concerned, there's just no possibility of this at this time, Leslie, because the public interest in my recordings has waned to a point that it's futile to spend the time making records which just lay on the shelves.

I've had a long career recording, and I'm very grateful for all the good things that have happened to me, so it's easy for you to appreciate I'm sure, that I'm not despondent about the apathy which exists.

There are thousands of record companies in this country now and they are little fly-by-night operations who cut records on spec with anybody at all - any singer, any artist, any musicians - take a quick flier at the market and if any interest develops they go ahead with exploitation. It is quite hopeless to try and compete with these people. You just go along recording songs from pictures or issuing recordings taken from old radio shows in the hope that one of them will catch on, but to try and go into active competition with this fierce situation is really ill-advised.

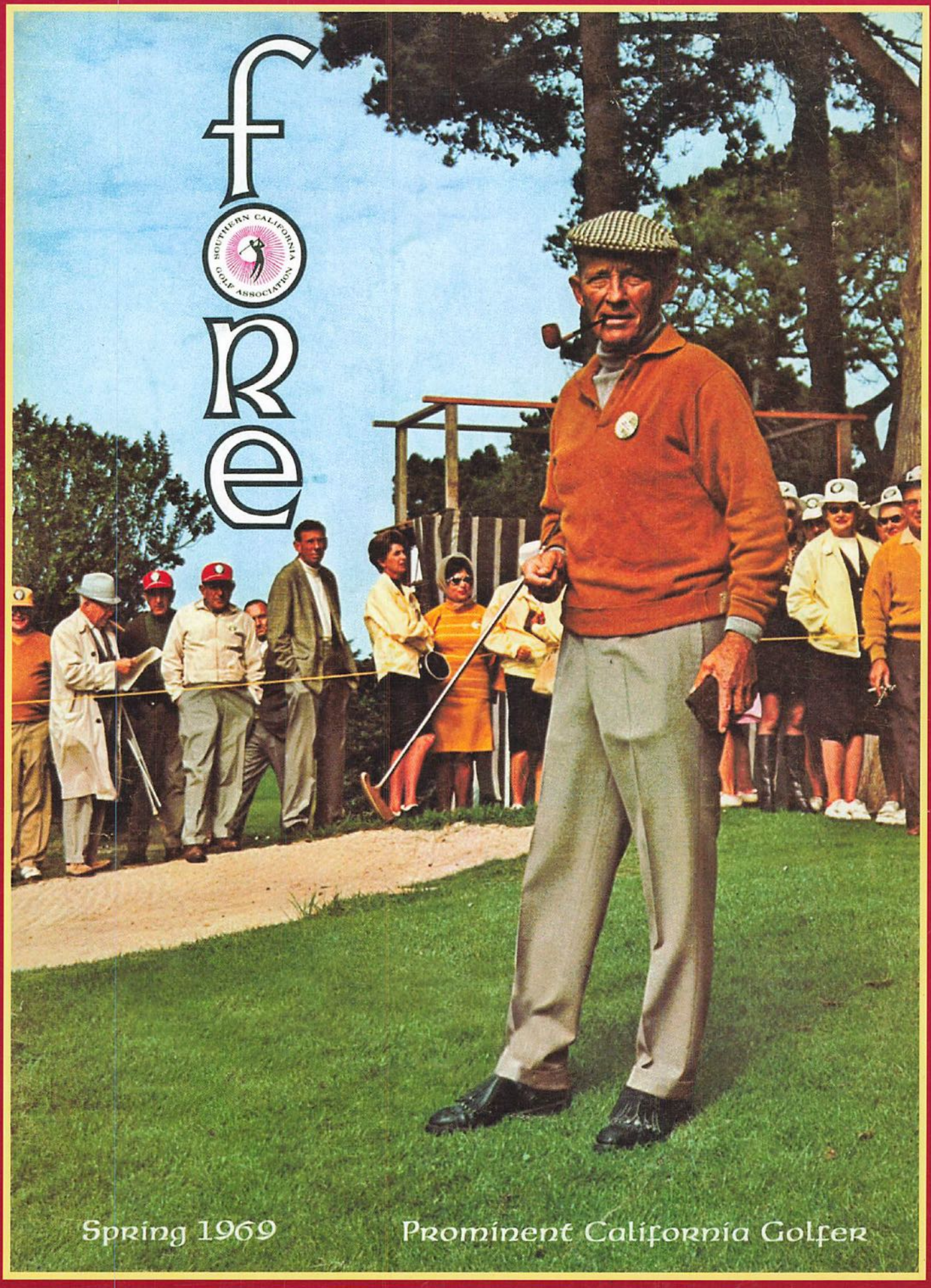
Am very pleased that you still are interested in what I sing, and I'm very grateful to you for writing Mr. Graves. As ever -

Your friend,

Bing

BC:lm

Bing Crosby



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